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Wednesday, 24 September 2014, 9 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa .... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.

Agenda item 108

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/69/1)

The President: In accordance with the decision taken at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2014, the General Assembly will hear a presentation by the Secretary-General of his annual report on the work of the Organization, under agenda item 108. I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: It is a great honour to welcome everyone to this renovated General Assembly Hall. This great Hall is home to "We the peoples". It has been restored, renewed and reinvented for the twenty-first century. I thank all present for making it possible. The Capital Master Plan was not an easy project. But the Member States embraced the vision. They made the investment. Now we see the wonderful results: a state-of-the-art space in which we shall work together to improve the state of the world.

We wanted to have a grand opening ceremony. But because of frugality and time we decided to have a virtual grand opening ceremony. In the name of all peoples and all nations, I am now proud to officially declare this General Assembly Hall open for business. Members saved a lot of money by having this virtual opening ceremony. I thank them very much for their understanding.

Every year at this time, hope fills this Hall — the hope embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the hopes of leaders who speak from this rostrum, the hopes of people across the world who hear those promises. This year, the horizon of hope has darkened. Our hearts have been made very heavy by unspeakable acts and the deaths of innocents. Cold War ghosts have returned to haunt our times. We have seen so much of the Arab Spring go violently wrong.

Not since the end of the Second World War have there been so many refugees, displaced people and asylum seekers. Never before has the United Nations been asked to reach so many people with emergency food assistance and other life-saving supplies. Diplomacy is on the defensive, undermined by those who believe in violence. Diversity is under assault by extremists who insist that their way is the only way. Disarmament is viewed as a distant dream, sabotaged by profiteers of perpetual warfare.

It may seem as if the world is falling apart, as crises pile up and diseases spread. But leadership is precisely about finding the seeds of hope and nurturing them into something bigger. That is our duty. That is my call on members today. It has been a terrible year for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. From barrel bombs to beheadings, from the deliberate starvation of civilians to assaults on hospitals, United Nations shelters and aid convoys, human rights and the rule of law are under attack.

(*spoke in French*)

After the latest tragedy in Gaza, Palestinians and Israelis seem more polarized than ever. If we do not save the two-State solution, we will be left in a state

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of permanent hostilities. The situation in and around Ukraine remains unstable. In South Sudan, the struggle for political power has killed thousands of people and exposed millions to the threat of famine. The Central African Republic is fractured and traumatized. Mali and the Sahel continue to suffer from insurgency, terrorism, the drug trade and organized crime. In Somalia, a coalition of African States confronts the terrorist group Al-Shabaab. In Nigeria, Boko Haram's murderous onslaught gained strength, with shocking consequences for women and girls.

(*spoke in English*)

In Iraq and Syria, we see new depths of barbarity with each passing day and devastating spillover effects across the region. As Muslim leaders around the world have repeatedly said, there is nothing Islamic about the terrorist organizations wreaking havoc in the region. Those extremist groups are a clear threat to international peace and security that requires a multifaceted international response. We need decisive action to stop atrocity crimes and frank discussions on what created the threat in the first place. The people of the region have been forced to walk on the broken shards of bad governance and bad decisions that fail to respect international law and basic human rights.

Across the world, the fragility of States and institutions has never been more apparent. Some have been hollowed out by corruption; others have pursued policies of exclusion that drive the victims towards anger, despair and violence. States must uphold their responsibility to govern — and govern for all their people.

Even where there is no overt warfare, violence still mars lives. Men prey on women across the globe, from battlefields to streets, from public spaces to the privacy of the home. Migrants face increasingly perilous journeys, and closed doors upon arrival. In many countries seen as models of integration, divisive politics are on the rise. People are very good at seeing prejudice in others, but less so in themselves. The trends that bring people together — instant communications, free trade and ease of travel — are also being exploited by forces that keep them apart. The world's "fasten seat belt" light is illuminated. Turbulence is testing the multilateral system, national institutions and people's lives.

Human rights provide one touchstone for our response. The Rights Up Front initiative aims to place human rights at the centre of our thinking and our efforts in the field. The protection of nearly 100,000 people at United Nations bases throughout South Sudan has been an early milestone of that new approach. The international community needs to be similarly sensitized to the value of human rights violations as an early-warning mechanism. I urge Member States to fulfil their responsibilities to their populations. States also need to be open to discussing their own vulnerabilities. Let us recall that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights not only proclaims a set of freedoms; it also warns that people will not stand idle if they are not protected. We need to do far more to anticipate problems and reach early political consensus.

To better meet the challenges before us, I have called for a review of the United Nations peace operations and will appoint a high-level review panel in the coming weeks. The unity of the Security Council is crucial. When the Security Council acts as one, we see results, such as the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme, agreement on a peacekeeping operation for the Central African Republic, timely support for the peace framework in the Great Lakes region of Africa. By contrast, continued disunity over Syria has resulted in grave human suffering and loss of credibility for the Council and our Organization. The General Assembly must also uphold its responsibilities and play its rightful role.

(*spoke in French*)

We must not let the smoke from today's fires blind us to longer-term challenges and opportunities. Hope may be hard to discern, but it is there. In clinics, classrooms and other places far from the spotlight, the development agenda is making remarkable progress. Poverty, child mortality and maternal deaths have been cut in half. More remains to be done, but those and other gains show the power of the Millennium Development Goals and what we can do when we work together.

Today, an inspiring global conversation is taking place on an agenda for the next 15 years. Earlier this month, small island developing States added their voices with the adoption of the Samoa Pathway, a far-reaching plan for addressing their unique vulnerabilities. Two days ago, in this Hall, we heard the appeals of the world's indigenous peoples for an end to marginalization (see A/69/PV.4). That same day, world leaders reaffirmed the importance of continuing to implement the groundbreaking consensus of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development.

The conversation for the future that we want is one of the most inclusive initiatives in United Nations history. More than 5 million people have now voted in the "My World" survey. I hope millions more will go on line to give their opinion. What is emerging from our dialogue is a remarkable project, a universal agenda that applies to all countries, a witness to the determination not to reduce but to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, and to allow all countries and all communities to set out on the path of truly sustainable development.

The General Assembly's Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals has just placed before us a proposed set of sustainable development goals that will allow us to complete the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, overcome inequalities, protect the planet and build the future we want. At the end of the year, at members' request, I will provide a synthesis report that will set the stage as Member States begin their negotiations.

(*spoke in English*)

Transformation is our goal. I can think of no better place to start than with opening doors and shattering ceilings for women and girls. Stereotypes continue to be deeply entrenched. Look at any crisis, from poverty to disaster, from disease to illiteracy, and you will see women and girls suffering the most. We cannot fulfil 100 per cent of the world's potential by excluding 50 per cent of the world's people.

Climate action is integral to all our hopes. Three days ago, in the streets of our host city, New York, I joined hundreds of thousands of people in marching for a cleaner, greener future. They sent a powerful message to the leaders of their impatience, but also of opportunity. Yesterday's Climate Summit was a landmark event. We saw a great coming together of countries, capitals, CEOs and citizens. Multistakeholder coalitions took unprecedented action to reduce emissions, build resilience and finance the transformation of our economies and societies. We must convert this momentum into a meaningful, universal climate agreement in Lima this December and in Paris next year. As one of the banners in the march said, we have a duty to do what must be done.

Funding is crucial for the credibility of climate and post-2015 development efforts. Now is the time to more properly match global wealth with global need. All resources — public and private, domestic and international — need to be tapped. When budgets are cut to the bone, people bleed. When resources are devoted to ever more sophisticated arms instead of ever-greater human potential, we are all less secure. Leadership is also about getting our priorities straight, our policies right and our investments working for people. The next 15 months will be a defining period for global prosperity and stability. I urge all present to keep their ambitions high.

The outbreak of Ebola in West Africa is an unprecedented crisis. That is why I have established an unprecedented health operation — the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) — to mobilize all the resources needed to reinforce work being done by the countries and communities affected. The Mission combines the expertise of the World Health Organization with the logistical capacities of the United Nations. UNMEER personnel arrived in Ghana two days ago to establish the Mission's headquarters.

The international community is rallying to assist local health workers. Now we need a twentyfold surge in care, tracking, transport and equipment. Food security is a growing concern, as food prices have gone up and food systems are in danger of breaking down. We must also fight the virus of fear and misinformation. Bans on travel or transport will not keep Ebola from getting out but will keep medical personnel and supplies from getting in. We need to isolate people affected by Ebola, but not the nations struggling to cope with it. With leadership and solidarity, we can help the people of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone bring the outbreak to an end and regain the path to a better future.

The world recently marked the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. Like so many conflicts, that war started less from grand design than from small problems badly handled. After the Second World War, the founding of the United Nations was a feat of global resolve. The post-war planners were driven not only by the idea of "never again" but by a vision of what the world could be if we "unite our strength". Today we face a profusion of mounting challenges. People are crying out for protection from greed and inequality. The United Nations must answer that call.

We are a century removed from the First World War and have 70 years of experience with the United Nations, yt the world is still not as peaceful as it could and should be. Today we face far more man-made crises than natural calamities. We may not control Mother Nature, but who else but us is responsible for securing peace and justice in our world? War, poverty, ignorance — crises caused by people can be stopped by people. I do not think we can yet feel comfortable about the world our generation is leaving to our children. Still, I have hope. I draw it from our Charter of the United Nations, our enduring guide in times of dramatic challenge and change. I am continually inspired by the staff, peacekeepers, humanitarian workers, human rights defenders and others who bring our document, this Charter, to life.

Just as we have renovated this great Hall for a new age, I look the Heads of State and Government to rebuild leadership and restore unity of purpose. We can tackle any challenge — and we will, as the United Nations. I thank them for their leadership.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Agenda item 8

General debate

The President: I will now deliver my statement in my capacity as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

I am honoured and humbled by the trust and confidence Member States have bestowed on me and my country, Uganda, in electing me to serve as President of the General Assembly during its sixty-ninth session. My thanks go to my President, who nominated me, my continent, which endorsed me, and the General Assembly, which elected me by acclamation.

This session and the coming year will be momentous. We will commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. We will also commemorate 20 years since the ground-breaking Fourth World Conference on Women, reach the target date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and formulate and adopt the post-2015 development agenda.

When the United Nations was founded nearly 69 years ago, it was an untested vision that was preoccupied with efforts to heal a world that had been ravaged by the scourge of war. It included only 51 countries, which is a tiny fraction of the 193 Member States that make up its membership today. It is therefore fitting that the Charter stresses the determination by the peoples of the United Nations to reaffirm their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. We have collectively achieved a lot as Member States over the past seven decades in maintaining peace and security, promoting human rights and fostering development, but a lot more remains to be done.

The world today is vastly different from what it was in 1945, but one thing remains constant: the need to work together to harness opportunities for prosperity and find solutions to the global challenges confronting humanity. We need to strengthen further this cooperation among Member States and promote peace, tolerance and compromise.

We are gathered here today at a time of unprecedented historic opportunity to improve the livelihoods of all people and set the world on a path towards achieving sustainable development. That development must be achieved in both the economic and the social and environmental dimensions of our world. I am reminded of the wise saying of Mahatma Gandhi, who exhorted all of us to be the change that we want to see in the world. It will take our collective efforts and action to attain that goal.

Since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) nearly 15 years ago, the lives of millions of people worldwide have undoubtedly changed. A number of MDG targets have been met, others are on course to be met, and a number will likely not be met by the target date. We must continue to build on the foundation laid by the MDGs, with nearly 1 billion people lifted out of extreme poverty, increased universal primary education, maternal and infant mortality reduced by nearly 50 per cent and increased access to clean drinking water, to mention some of the significant achievements. Yet a lot remains to be done. The sanitation target lags far behind, too many women still die in labour and inequalities within and among countries remain very high. With fewer than 470 days to the MDG target date, we must intensify our efforts to accelerate progress and achieve as many MDG targets as possible in the remaining period.

In the coming months, we will be preoccupied with formulating the new agenda, which should be ambitious, transformative and produce tangible benefits and improved livelihoods for all. With the eradication of poverty and hunger at its core, the new agenda should promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, safeguard the future of our planet and lead to the achievement of sustainable development.

We will use the outcomes of the intergovernmental processes, namely, the proposal on Sustainable Development Goals, the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, the recommendations from the structured dialogues on a technology facilitation mechanism and the forthcoming Secretary-General's synthesis report. The outcome of the third Conference on Financing for Development, which will be held in July 2015 in Addis Ababa, will also be vital.

Our greatest responsibility will be to ensure that adequate means for implementing the post-2015 development agenda in terms of finances, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building are mobilized and effectively utilized. That is why I chose as the theme for the general debate of this session "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda".

One of the key issues we must pay particular attention to is infrastructure development. It will be pivotal in accelerating economic growth and development, expanding opportunities and improving lives. It is therefore essential to prioritize investments in infrastructure, especially energy, roads, railways, waterways, airports, ports, border-crossing facilities and information and communications technology. Significant infrastructure deficits in many developing countries, particularly countries in special situations, Africa, least developed countries, landlocked least developed countries and small island developing States, result in increased production and transaction costs and reduce their competitiveness.

I call upon all Member States and all stakeholders to work tirelessly over the next 12 months to formulate and agree on a truly transformative agenda, to be adopted in September next year. Let us always remember that we carry the expectations of millions and millions of people who yearn for a better future. Many issues and challenges will require our attention and efforts during this session. Allow me to highlight a few of them.

While a lot of progress has been made towards the eradication of extreme poverty, we still have nearly a billion people trapped in poverty. We must therefore put poverty eradication at the forefront of the development agenda. We need to address the rising inequality within and between countries, which continues to pose formidable challenges to our efforts to improve the life of every human being. For many developing countries, improved market access, debt sustainability and access to essential medicines for the poor remain persistent challenges. We must continue to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women. We must do more to increase the access of girls to education, increase women's participation in leadership and decision-making positions, and enhance their economic empowerment. I will be convening a high-level thematic debate on the topic in February next year.

On health, we need to step up efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other communicable and non-communicable diseases. We have seen in recent months the loss of lives and the dire effects caused by the Ebola outbreak in some West African countries, whose health systems have been overwhelmed. I also thank the Secretary-General and Members of the United Nations for the Mission that has been set up to combat the outbreak of that epidemic. Globally, hundreds of thousands of women continue to die from pregnancy and childbirth-related causes. In many developing countries, preventable medical conditions are still the main killer of children under the age of 5

The outlook for education is equally mixed. While under the Millennium Development Goals campaign primary-school enrolment increased exponentially, the issue of quality also needs to be addressed. For tertiary education, skills development needs greater attention.

One of the most pressing challenges we face is the increasing level of unemployment. The rate of youth unemployment is almost three times higher than that for adult unemployment and in some cases exceeds 50 per cent. That puts in sharp focus the need to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda is truly transformative and leads to increased job opportunities.

As yesterday's Climate Summit highlighted, climate change is a defining challenge of our times. We are witnessing the adverse effects of climate change, including rising sea levels, land degradation, desertification and changing weather patterns, among others. As demonstrated during the recent United Nations Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), held in Samoa, SIDS and the least developed countries are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. I intend to convene a high-level event on combating climate change in June 2015 to further galvanize political support for efforts to reach a global agreement in 2015 under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

We have recently witnessed an alarming increase in the number of violent conflicts and new threats posed by terrorist activities, extremism and intolerance. We need to intensify efforts to achieve the peaceful settlement of conflicts. In that context, strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is essential, and I will be convening a high-level thematic debate on that important issue. The international community must stand united and must resolve to combat such challenges, which threaten the stability not only of individual States but of entire regions. We must speak with one voice to reiterate that the killing of innocent civilians under any pretext is unacceptable.

We should continue to focus on the revitalization of the General Assembly and the reform of the Security Council. While some progress has been made towards making the General Assembly more effective and efficient, we need to do more. The need to reform the Security Council is urgent, as reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, which was adopted as resolution 60/1. As I said earlier, the organs of the United Nations were set up soon after the Second World War by only 51 countries. We are now 193 countries. Clearly, the need to change things is very pressing. We need to find a way of making progress in the intergovernmental negotiation process, and I call upon Member States to redouble their efforts.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker for this morning, I would like to remind members that the list of speakers for the general debate has been established on the agreed basis that statements should be no longer than 15 minutes to enable all the speakers to be heard at a given meeting. Within that time frame, I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a normal speed so that interpretation in the six official United Nations languages may be provided properly.

I would like also to draw attention to the decision taken by the General Assembly at previous sessions that the practice of expressing congratulations inside the General Assembly Hall after a speech has been delivered is strongly discouraged. In that connection, after delivering their statements, speakers are invited to exit the Hall through room GA-200, located behind the rostrum, before returning to their seats.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to proceed in the manner outlined during the general debate of the sixty-ninth session?

It was so decided.

The President: Finally, I should like to draw to the attention of members to the fact that, during the general debate, official photos of all the speakers are taken by the Department of Public Information. Members interested in obtaining those photos are requested to contact the Photo Library of the United Nations.

Address by Ms. Dilma Rousseff, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Ms. Dilma Rousseff, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Dilma Rousseff, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Rousseff (*spoke in Portuguese; interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is a great satisfaction for Brazil, which has the honour and privilege of opening this debate, to have as the President of this session of the General Assembly a son of Africa. As Brazilians we are united by ties of history, culture and friendship with the African continent, whose legacy was and always will be decisive for my country's national identity.

I open this general debate on the eve of elections in Brazil that will determine the President of the Republic, State governors and a significant portion of our Congress. Those elections represent the celebration of a democracy we achieved almost 30 years ago, after two decades of dictatorial rule. Through democracy we also advanced towards the country's economic stability.

During the past 12 years in particular, we have consolidated those achievements by building an inclusive society based on equal opportunity. The great transformation to which we are committed has resulted in a modern economy and a more egalitarian society. At the same time it has required strong civic participation, respect for human rights and a sustainable vision of development. Lastly, it has also required an engagement on the world stage characterized by a multilateral approach, respect for international law, the quest for peace and a culture of solidarity.

A few days ago, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations announced that Brazil is no longer on the World Hunger Map. That transformation is the result of economic policies that have generated 21 million jobs, raised the minimum wage and increased its purchasing power by 71 per cent in the past 12 years. Those policies have also reduced inequality. Since 2003, 36 million Brazilians have been lifted out of extreme poverty, 22 million of them during my Administration alone. Social policies and income-transfer programmes, coordinated within our plan for a Brazil without extreme poverty, have also contributed to those results. On the health-care front, we have been able to meet our target for reduced child mortality before the deadline set by the Millennium Development Goals.

We have also made access to basic primary and middle-school education universally available, and we are now pursuing the same goal for secondary education. We are equally committed to enhancing the quality of education by, inter alia, improving curriculums and raising the profile of teachers. Vocational education has made strides, with the creation of hundreds of new schools and the professional training and development of 8 million young people over the past four years. There has been an unprecedented expansion of higher education, with the establishment of new publicly funded universities and of scholarships and financial aid that has given 3 million students access to private universities. Affirmative-action policies have enabled poor, black and indigenous students to enrol in universities on a massive scale.

Finally, our efforts to tackle the challenges of building a knowledge-based society have led to the creation of a programme known as Science Without Borders, which has sent more than 100,000 undergraduate and graduate students to the world's best universities. Through a presidential initiative, our National Congress has enacted legislation allocating to education 75 per cent of the royalties earned from pre-salt oil exploration and 50 per cent of the social fund generated by pre-salt oil revenues, with 25 per cent of pre-salt oil exploration royalties going to health care. We will thus be able to transform finite resources such as oil and gas into permanent assets — education, science and technology, and innovation. That will be our passport to the future.

We have not neglected fiscal discipline and monetary stability, and we have striven to protect Brazil from external volatility. We were thus able to overcome the challenges arising from the major global economic crisis, triggered in 2008 by the collapse of Lehman Brothers, which subsequently developed into national sovereign debt crises affecting many countries. We resisted its worst consequences — unemployment, wage depreciation, erosion of social rights and stalled investment. We followed through with income distribution by stimulating growth and employment and maintaining our investment in infrastructure. Brazil jumped from the thirteenth- to the seventh-largest economy in the world. Our per capita income more than tripled, and inequality fell sharply. In 2002, more than half of Brazil's population was poor or living below the poverty line; today three out of every four Brazilians are firmly in the middle-class and upper-income ranges. During the economic crisis, when hundreds of millions around the world were left unemployed, Brazil created 12 million new jobs. In addition, we became a primary destination for foreign investment, and we resumed our investment in infrastructure through strong partnerships with the private sector.

All of those gains have occurred within the context of a sound fiscal environment. We have reduced our net ratio of public debt to gross domestic product (GDP) from about 60 per cent to 35 per cent. Our gross external debt in relation to GDP fell from 42 per cent to 14 per cent. Our international reserves increased tenfold, making Brazil an international creditor. Our annual inflation rate has also remained within the maximum and minimum range fixed by our current national targets.

Although we have managed to fend off the most harmful consequences of the global crisis, we have nonetheless been acutely affected by it in the past few years, owing to the persistence all over the world of substantial economic difficulties that have had a negative effect on our growth. Here I would like to reiterate what I said at the opening of last year's general debate (see A/68/PV.5). It is vital and urgent that we restore the momentum of the global economy, which should work to drive investment and international trade and reduce inequalities between countries, and not become a factor that ultimately slows economic development and income distribution in society as a whole.

Regarding international trade, there must be a unanimous commitment to an action plan leading to the conclusion of the Doha Round. It is also imperative that we end the disparity between the growing importance of developing countries to the global economy and their insufficient representation and participation in the decision-making processes of international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The delay in expanding developing countries' voting rights in those institutions is unacceptable. The risk to those institutions is that could lose their legitimacy and effectiveness.

In July Brazil had the pleasure of hosting the sixth Summit of the BRICS countries, namely, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. We welcomed their leaders in a fraternal and fruitful meeting that pointed to important possibilities for the future. We signed agreements establishing a new development bank and a contingent reserve arrangement. The bank will cater to the infrastructure financing needs of the BRICS and other developing countries. The contingent reserve arrangement will protect them from financial volatility. Each instrument will have a capital injection of $100 billion.

The current generation of world leaders — our generation — is also being called on to deal with significant challenges to peace, collective security and the environment. We have been unable either to solve old disputes or to prevent new threats. It is impossible to eliminate the underlying causes of conflict through the use of force. That has been made clear by the persistence of the Palestine question, the systematic massacre of the Syrian people, the tragic national fragmentation of Iraq, the serious insecurity in Libya, the conflicts in the Sahel and the clashes in Ukraine. Instead of leading to peace, every military intervention has worsened those conflicts. We are witnessing the tragic proliferation of civilian victims and humanitarian disasters. We cannot allow such barbaric acts to increase and violate our ethical, moral and civilizational values. Nor can we remain indifferent to the spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa. We therefore support the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response. Brazil is solidly in favour of it.

The Security Council has had some difficulties in promoting peaceful solutions to those conflicts. To overcome such stalemates, a genuine reform of the Council will be required, a process that has been dragging on for quite some time. The coming seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, in 2015, appears to be an occasion conducive to achieving the progress that the situation currently calls for. I am quite certain that we all understand the serious risks arising from paralysis and inaction in the Security Council. A more representative and legitimate Security Council would also be more effective.

I wish to underscore that we cannot possibly remain indifferent to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, particularly after the recent dramatic events in Gaza. We condemn the disproportionate use of force that has strongly victimized the civilian population, especially women and children. The conflict must be properly resolved, not precariously managed, as has been the case up to now. Effective negotiations between the parties must ultimately lead to a two-State solution with Palestine and Israel living side by side in security within internationally recognized borders.

Amid so many conflict situations, Latin America and the Caribbean seek to face up to the main problem that has marked our region for centuries. I am talking about social inequality. Democratic roots have become stronger, and the demand for more just, inclusive and sustainable growth has grown ever stronger. Through the Union of South American Nations, the Common Market of the South, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, integration efforts have made tremendous headway.

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our times. To overcome that challenge, we need a sense of urgency, political courage and a keen understanding that actors have to contribute according to the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. The recent Climate Summit, which was convened in a very timely manner by the Secretary-General, further invigorated negotiations at the level of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Brazilian Government will strive to ensure that the outcome of the negotiations will lead to a balanced, fair and effective agreement. Brazil has been doing its part to face up to the challenge of climate change. In 2009, during the Copenhagen Conference, we committed to a voluntary reduction of 36 to 39 per cent of our projected emissions by 2020. Between 2010 and 2013, we avoided releasing into the atmosphere an average of 650 million tons of carbon dioxide every year. Throughout those years, we achieved the lowest deforestation rates in our history. In the past decade, we have reduced deforestation by 79 per cent, without giving up our agenda of economic development and social inclusion.

We have therefore shown that it is possible to grow, to include, to preserve and to protect. Such an achievement stems from the continuous and steadfast commitment of the Brazilian Government, civil society and other public and private stakeholders. We hope that developed countries, which have not only the legal but also a political obligation to lead by example, will unequivocally and concretely demonstrate their commitment to combat this problem that affects us all.

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, we were proud to set the foundations for a new development agenda, based on sustainable development goals applicable to both developing and developed nations. It will be crucial for us to identify the means of implementation that correspond to the magnitude of the challenges that we have committed ourselves to overcoming. We must be ambitious when it comes to financing, cooperation, national capacity-building and technology transfer, especially to ensure that the least developed countries benefit. Let me underscore, in that context, the need to establish a mechanism for the development, transfer and dissemination of clean, environmentally sustainable technologies.

In addition to sustainable development and peace, the international order that we seek to build must be anchored on fundamental values. Among those values, emphasis should be put on efforts to combat all forms of discrimination and exclusion. We have a clear-cut commitment to the empowerment of women in the labour market, liberal professions, entrepreneurship, political activity and access to education, among others. My Administration has tirelessly fought violence against women in all its forms. We consider the twenty-first century to be the century of women.

By the same token, the promotion of racial equality seeks to compensate Brazilians of African descent for the consequences of the centuries of slavery to which they were subjected. Today, those Brazilians account for more than half of our population. We owe them our rich and permanent legacy of cultural, religious and human wealth and values. For us, racial miscegenation is a matter of pride. Racism is not only a heinous and extremely serious crime, but it is also a scourge that we have not hesitated to fight, punish and eradicate.

The same commitment that we have had to combat violence against women and African Brazilians, we have also had against homophobia. My country's Supreme Court has recognized same-sex civil unions, thereby ensuring them the full range of civil rights arising therefrom. We firmly believe in the dignity of all human beings and in the universal nature of their fundamental rights. Those rights must be protected from all double standards and all forms of politicization, both domestically and internationally.

Yet another fundamental value is the respect for public good. We all face a relentless fight against corruption. History has shown that there is only one correct and efficient way to tackle corruption; that is by ending impunity, thereby strengthening institutions that oversee, investigate and punish acts of corruption, money-laundering and other financial crimes. That is a responsibility incumbent upon each Government, a responsibility that Brazil has fulfilled by strengthening our institutions.

In Brazil, we have designed and built a Government transparency portal website that gives citizens access to all information on Government spending within 24 hours after monies are spent. We have also adopted a law on access to information, which allows all Brazilian citizens the right to access Government data, except for that related to the country's national sovereignty. We have strengthened and given autonomy to investigators as well as to those in charge of internal Government controls. We have passed laws that punish not only those who actively engage in corruption but also those who passively agree with acts of corruption. Strengthening those institutions is absolutely crucial for strengthening open and democratic governance. Brazil's recent re-election to the Executive Committee of the Open Government Partnership will also allow us to contribute to promoting more transparent Governments worldwide.

It is essential that measures be taken to effectively protect human rights, not only in the real world but also in the virtual world, as stated in resolution 68/167 on privacy in the digital age, adopted by the General Assembly in the past year. Brazil and Germany promoted an important discussion on the matter in 2013. We intend to deepen that discussion during this sixty-ninth session. For our review of such matters, the 2013 annual report of the Office of the United Nations

High Commissioner for Human Rights, published in May 2014, can provide significant inputs. In September 2013, I proposed from this rostrum (see A/68/PV.5) that a civil framework be development for the governance and use of the Internet, a framework based on the principles of freedom of expression, privacy, network neutrality and cultural diversity.

I am pleased to note that the international community has, since then, mobilized its efforts to enhance the current Internet governance architecture. Brazil's initiative to hold the Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance, NETmundial, in São Paulo in April was an important step in the process. The Meeting brought together stakeholders from various regions of the world and from multiple sectors. Discussions were held on the principles that should be followed and the actions to be undertaken in order to ensure that the Internet will continue to develop in an open, democratic, free, multisectoral and multilateral manner.

The United Nations and its Member States have before them today challenges of great magnitude, which should be the priorities of this session of the General Assembly. The year 2015 must be a turning point. I am certain that we will not shy away from fulfilling, with a sense of courage and insight, our lofty responsibilities to build an international order founded on the promotion of peace, sustainable development, poverty eradication and the reduction of inequality. Brazil stands ready and is fully determined to contribute to that end.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Dilma Rousseff, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United States of America.

Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Obama: We come together at a crossroads between war and peace, between disorder and integration, between fear and hope. Around the globe, there are signposts of progress. The shadow of the Second World War that existed at the founding of this institution has been lifted, and the prospect of war between major Powers reduced. The ranks of Member States have more than tripled, and more people live under Governments that they elected. Hundreds of millions of human beings have been freed from the prison of poverty, with the proportion of those living in extreme poverty cut in half. And the world economy continues to strengthen after the worst financial crisis of our lives.

Today, whether you live in downtown Manhattan or in my grandmother's village more than 200 miles from Nairobi, you can hold in your hand more information than the world's greatest libraries. Together, we have learned how to cure disease and harness the power of the wind and the sun. The very existence of this Organization is a unique achievement, with the people of the world committing to resolve their differences peacefully and to solve their problems together. I often tell young people in the United States that, despite the headlines, this is the best time in human history to be born, for you are more likely than ever before to be literate, to be healthy and to be free to pursue your dreams.

And yet there is a pervasive unease in our world — a sense that the very forces that have brought us together have created new dangers and made it difficult for any single nation to insulate itself from global forces. As we gather here, an outbreak of Ebola overwhelms public health systems in West Africa and threatens to move rapidly across borders. Russian aggression in Europe recalls the days when large nations trampled small ones in pursuit of territorial ambitions. The brutality of terrorists in Syria and Iraq forces us to look into the heart of darkness.

Each of those problems demands urgent attention. But they are also symptoms of a broader problem: the failure of our international system to keep pace with an interconnected world. We, collectively, have not invested adequately in the public health capacity of developing countries. Too often, we have failed to enforce international norms when it has been inconvenient to do so. And we have not confronted forcefully enough the intolerance, sectarianism and hopelessness that feeds violent extremism in too many parts of the globe.

Fellow representatives, we come together as United Nations with a choice to make. We can renew the international system that has enabled so much progress, or we can allow ourselves to be pulled back by an undertow of instability. We can reaffirm our collective responsibility to confront global problems, or be swamped by more and more outbreaks of instability. And for America, the choice is clear — we choose hope over fear. We see the future not as something out of our control, but as something we can shape for the better through concerted and collective effort. We reject fatalism or cynicism when it comes to human affairs. We choose to work for the world as it should be, as our children deserve it to be.

There is much that must be done to meet the test of this moment. But today I would like to focus on two defining questions at the root of so many of our challenges. Will the nations represented here today be able to renew the purpose of the United Nations founding, and will we come together to reject the cancer of violent extremism?

First, all of us — big nations and small — must meet our responsibility to observe and enforce international norms. We are here because others realized that we gain more from cooperation than from conquest. One hundred years ago, a World War claimed the lives of many millions, proving that with the terrible power of modern weaponry, the cause of empire ultimately leads to the graveyard. It would then take another World War to roll back the forces of fascism, the notions of racial supremacy, and form the United Nations to ensure that no nation can subjugate its neighbours and claim their territory.

Recently, Russia's actions in Ukraine have challenged that post-war order. Here are the facts. After the people of Ukraine mobilized popular protests and calls for reform, their corrupt President fled. Against the will of the Government in Kyiv, Crimea was annexed by Russia. Russia poured arms into eastern Ukraine, fuelling violent separatists and a conflict that has killed thousands. When a civilian airliner was shot down from areas that those proxy forces controlled, those forces refused to allow access to the crash site for days. When Ukraine started to reassert control over its territory, Russia gave up the pretence of merely supporting the separatists and moved troops across the border.

That reflects a vision of a world in which might makes right; a world in which one nation's borders can be redrawn by another and civilized people are not allowed to recover the remains of their loved ones because of the truth that might be revealed.

America stands for something different. We believe that right makes might, that bigger nations should not be able to bully smaller ones and that people should be able to choose their own future. Those are simple truths, but they must be defended. America and our allies will support the people of Ukraine as they develop their democracy and economy. We will reinforce our NATO allies and uphold our commitment to collective self-defence. We will impose a cost on Russia for its aggression, and we will counter falsehoods with the truth. And we call upon others to join us on the right side of history, for while small gains can be won at the barrel of a gun, they will ultimately be turned back if enough voices support the freedom of nations and the right of peoples to make their own decisions.

Moreover, a different path is available — the path of diplomacy and peace, and the ideals that this institution is designed to uphold. The recent ceasefire agreement in Ukraine offers an opening to achieve those objectives. If Russia takes that path — a path that for stretches of the post-Cold War period resulted in prosperity for the Russian people — then we will lift our sanctions and welcome Russia's role in addressing common challenges. That is, after all, what the United States and Russia have been able to do in past years — from reducing our nuclear stockpiles to meeting our obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to cooperating to remove and destroy Syria's declared chemical weapons. That is the kind of cooperation we are prepared to pursue again, if Russia changes course.

That speaks to a central question of our global age — will we solve our problems together in a spirit of mutual interest and mutual respect, or will we descend into the destructive rivalries of the past? When nations find common ground — not simply based on power, but on principle — then we can make enormous progress. And I stand before the Assembly today committed to investing American strength and to working with all nations to address the problems we face in the twenty-first century.

As we speak, America is deploying our doctors and scientists, supported by our military, to help contain the outbreak of Ebola and pursue new treatments. But we need a broader effort to stop a disease that could kill hundreds of thousands, inflict horrific suffering, destabilize economies and move rapidly across borders. It is easy to see that problem as a distant problem, until it is not. And that is why we will continue to mobilize other countries to join us in making concrete commitments, significant commitments to fight the outbreak and enhance our system of global health security for the long term.

America is pursuing a diplomatic resolution to the Iranian nuclear issue, as part of our commitment to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and pursue the peace and security of a world without them. But that can take place only if Iran seizes this historic opportunity. My message to Iran's leaders and people has been simple and consistent: do not let this opportunity pass. We can reach a solution that meets Iran's energy needs while assuring the world that Iran's nuclear programme is peaceful.

America is and will continue to be a Pacific Power, promoting peace, stability, and the free flow of commerce among nations. But we will insist that all nations abide by the rules of the road and resolve their territorial disputes peacefully, consistent with international law. That is how the Asia-Pacific region has grown. And that is the only way to protect the progress going forward.

America is committed to a development agenda that eradicates extreme poverty by 2030. We will do our part to help people feed themselves, power their economies and care for their sick. If the world acts together, we can make sure that all of our children enjoy lives of opportunity and dignity.

America is pursuing ambitious reductions in its carbon emissions, and we have increased our investments in clean energy. We will do our part and help developing nations do theirs. But the science tells us that we can succeed in combating climate change only if we are joined in that effort by every other nation, by every major Power. That is how we can protect the planet for our children and our grandchildren.

In other words, on issue after issue, we cannot rely on a rule book written for a different century. If we lift our eyes beyond our borders, if we think globally and if we act cooperatively, we can shape the course of this century as our predecessors shaped the post-World War Two age.

But as we look to the future, one issue risks starting a cycle of conflict that could derail so much progress. That is the cancer of violent extremism, which has ravaged so many parts of the Muslim world. Of course, terrorism is not new. Speaking before the Assembly, President Kennedy put it well:

> "Terror is not a new weapon. Throughout history it has been used by those who could not prevail either by persuasion or by example." (*A/PV.1013, para. 96*)

In the twentieth century, terror was used by all manner of groups who failed to come to power through public support. But in this century, we have faced a more lethal and ideological brand of terrorists who have perverted one of the world's great religions. With access to technology that allows small groups to do great harm, they have embraced a nightmarish vision that would divide the world into adherents and infidels — killing as many innocent civilians as possible and employing the most brutal methods to intimidate people within their communities.

I have made it clear that America will not base its entire foreign policy on reacting to terrorism. Instead, we have waged a focused campaign against Al-Qaida and its associated forces — taking out their leaders and denying them the safe havens they rely on. At the same time, we have reaffirmed again and again that the United States is not and never will be at war with Islam. Islam teaches peace. Muslims the world over aspire to live with dignity and a sense of justice. And when it comes to America and Islam, there is no us and them, there is only us, because millions of Muslim Americans are part of the fabric of our country.

So we reject any suggestion of a clash of civilizations. Belief in permanent religious war is the misguided refuge of extremists who cannot build or create anything and therefore peddle only fanaticism and hate. And it is no exaggeration to say that the future of humankind depends on our uniting against those who would divide us along the fault lines of tribe or sect, race or religion.

But this is not simply a matter of words. Collectively, we must take concrete steps to address the danger posed by religiously motivated fanatics and the trends that fuel their recruitment. Moreover, the campaign against extremism goes beyond a narrow security challenge. For while we have worked methodically to degrade Al-Qaida at its core and have supported a transition to a sovereign Afghan Government, extremist ideology has shifted to other places, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, where a quarter of the young people have no job, where food and water could grow scarce, and where corruption is rampant and sectarian conflicts have become increasingly hard to contain.

As an international community, we must meet this challenge with a focus on four areas. First, the terrorist group known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) must be degraded and ultimately destroyed. It has terrorized all those whom it has come across in Iraq and Syria. Mothers, sisters and daughters have been subjected to rape as a weapon of war. Innocent children have been gunned down. Bodies have been dumped into mass graves. Religious minorities have been starved to death. In the most horrific crimes imaginable, innocent human beings have been beheaded, with videos of the atrocity distributed to shock the conscience of the world.

No god condones such terror. No grievance justifies such actions. There can be no reasoning or negotiation with that brand of evil. The only language understood by killers of that kind is the language of force. So the United States of America will work with a broad coalition to dismantle that network of death. In this effort, we do not act alone, nor do we intend to send United States troops to occupy foreign lands. Instead, we will support Iraqis and Syrians fighting to reclaim their communities. We will use our military might to roll back ISIL in a campaign of air strikes. We will train and equip forces fighting those terrorists on the ground. We will work to cut off their financing and stop the flow of fighters into and out of the region. And more than 40 nations have already offered to join the coalition. Today, I ask the world to join in this effort. Those who have joined ISIL should leave the battlefield while they can. Those who continue to fight for a hateful cause will find that they are increasingly alone. For we will not succumb to threats, and we will demonstrate that the future belongs to those who build, not to those who destroy. So that is an immediate challenge, the first one we must meet.

The second challenge is that it is time for the world, especially Muslim communities, to explicitly, forcefully and consistently reject the ideology of organizations such as Al-Qaida and ISIL. It is one of the tasks of all great religions to accommodate devout faith with a modern, multicultural world. No children are born hating, and no children anywhere should be educated to hate other people. There should be no further tolerance of so-called clerics who call on people to harm innocents because they are Jewish or Christian or Muslim. It is time for a new compact among the civilized peoples of this world to eradicate war at its most fundamental source, and that is the corruption of young minds by violent ideology.

That means cutting off the funding that fuels such hatred. It is time to end the hypocrisy of those who accumulate wealth through the global economy and then siphon funds to those who teach children to tear it down. That means contesting the space that terrorists occupy, including the Internet and social media. Their propaganda has coerced young people to travel abroad to fight their wars and has turned students — young people full of potential — into suicide bombers. We must offer an alternative vision. That means bringing people of different faiths together. All religions have been attacked by extremists from within at some point, and all people of faith have a responsibility to lift up the value at the heart of all great religions. Do unto your neighbour as you would do — as you would have others do — unto yourself.

The ideology of ISIL or Al-Qaida or Boko Haram will wilt and die if it is consistently exposed and confronted and refuted in the light of day. Look at the new Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies, whose purpose Sheikh Abdallah Bin Bayyah has described as "We must declare war on war, so the outcome will be peace upon peace". Look at the young British Muslims who have responded to terrorist propaganda by starting the #notinmyname campaign, declaring that ISIL is hiding behind a false Islam. Look at the Christian and Muslim leaders who came together in the Central African Republic to reject violence; listen to the imam there who said that, while politics may try to divide the religious in that country, religion should not be a cause of hate, war, or strife.

Later today, the Security Council will adopt a resolution that underscores the responsibility of States to counter violent extremism. But resolutions must be followed by tangible commitments, so that we are accountable when we fall short. Next year, we should all be prepared to announce the concrete steps that we have taken to counter extremist ideologies in our own countries — by getting intolerance out of schools, stopping radicalization before it spreads and promoting institutions and programmes that build new bridges of understanding.

Thirdly, we must address the cycle of conflict, especially sectarian conflict, that creates the conditions that terrorists prey upon. There is nothing new about wars within religions. Christianity endured centuries of vicious sectarian conflict. Today it is violence within Muslim communities that has become the source of so much human misery. It is time to acknowledge the destruction wrought by proxy wars and terror campaigns between Sunni and Shia across the Middle East. And it is time that political, civic and religious leaders rejected sectarian strife. So let us be clear. This is a fight that no one is winning. A brutal civil war in Syria has already killed nearly 200,000 people and has displaced millions. Iraq has come perilously close to plunging back into the abyss. The conflict has created a fertile recruiting ground for terrorists, who inevitably export such violence.

The good news is that we also see signs that the tide can be reversed. We have a new, inclusive Government in Baghdad and a new Iraqi Prime Minister welcomed by his neighbours; we see Lebanese factions that reject those who try to provoke war. Such steps must be followed by a broader truce. Nowhere is that more necessary than in Syria. Together with our partners, America is training and equipping the Syrian opposition to be a counterweight to the terrorists of ISIL and the brutality of the Al-Assad regime. But the only lasting solution to Syria's civil war is political — an inclusive political transition that responds to the legitimate aspirations of all Syrian citizens, regardless of ethnicity, regardless of creed.

Cynics may argue that such an outcome can never come to pass. But there is no other way for the madness in Syria to end, whether one year from now or 10. And it points to the fact that it is time for a broader negotiation in the region, in which major Powers address their differences directly, honestly and peacefully across the table from one another, rather than through gun-wielding proxies. I can promise the international community that America will remain engaged in the region, and we are prepared to engage in that effort.

My fourth and final point is a simple one. The countries of the Arab and Muslim world must focus on the extraordinary potential of their people, especially the youth. And here I would like to speak directly to young people across the Muslim world. You come from a great tradition that stands for education, not ignorance; innovation, not destruction; the dignity of life, not murder. Those who call you away from that path are betraying that tradition, not defending it. You have demonstrated that when young people have the tools to succeed — good schools, education in math and science, an economy that nurtures creativity and entrepreneurship — then societies will flourish. So, America will partner with those who promote that vision.

Where women are full participants in a country's politics or economy, societies are more likely to succeed. And that is why we support the participation of women in parliaments and peace processes, schools and the economy. If young people live in places where the only option is between the dictates of a State or the lure of an extremist underground, then no counterterrorism strategy can succeed. But where a genuine civil society is allowed to flourish — where people can express their views and organize peacefully for a better life — then you dramatically expand the alternatives to terror.

And such positive change need not come at the expense of tradition and faith. We see that in Iraq, where a young man started a library for his peers. "We link Iraq's heritage to their hearts", he said, and "give them a reason to stay". We see it in Tunisia, where secular and Islamist parties worked together through a political process to produce a new constitution. We see it in Senegal, where civil society thrives alongside a strong democratic Government. We see it in Malaysia, where vibrant entrepreneurship is propelling a former colony into the ranks of advanced economies. And we see it in Indonesia, where what began as a violent transition has evolved into a genuine democracy.

Ultimately the task of rejecting sectarianism and rejecting extremism is a generational one, and a task for the people of the Middle East themselves. No external power can bring about a transformation of hearts and minds. But America will be a respectful and constructive partner. We will neither tolerate terrorist safe havens nor act as an occupying Power. We will take action against threats to our security and our allies, while building an architecture of counter-terrorism cooperation. We will increase efforts to lift up those who counter extremist ideologies and who seek to resolve sectarian conflict. And we will expand our programmes to support entrepreneurship and civil society, education and youth, because ultimately those investments are the best antidote to violence.

We recognize as well that leadership will be necessary to address the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. As bleak as the landscape appears, America will not give up on the pursuit of peace. Understand that the situation in Iraq and Syria and Libya should cure anybody of the illusion that the Arab-Israeli conflict is the main source of problems in the region. For far too long that has been used as an excuse to distract people from problems at home. The violence engulfing the region today has made too many Israelis ready to abandon the hard work of peace. And that is something worthy of reflection within Israel. Because let us be clear: the status quo in the West Bank and Gaza is not sustainable. We cannot afford to turn away from that effort — not when rockets are fired at innocent Israelis, or when the lives of so many Palestinian children are taken from us in Gaza. So long as I am President, we will stand up for the principle that Israelis, Palestinians, the region and the world will be more just and more safe with two States living side by side, in peace and security.

So this is what America is prepared to do: take action against immediate threats, while pursuing a world in which the need for such action is diminished. The United States will never shy away from defending our interests, but we will also not shy away from the promise of this institution and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights — the notion that peace is not merely the absence of war, but the presence of a better life.

I realize that America's critics will be quick to point out that at times we too have failed to live up to our ideals and that America has plenty of problems within its own borders. That is true. In a summer marked by instability in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, I know the world also took notice of the small American city of Ferguson, Missouri, where a young man was killed and a community was divided. So, yes, we have our own racial and ethnic tensions. And, like every country, we continually wrestle with how to reconcile the vast changes wrought by globalization and greater diversity with the traditions that we hold dear.

But we welcome the scrutiny of the world, because what you see in America is a country that has steadily worked to address our problems, to make our union more perfect, to bridge the divides that existed at the founding of this nation. America is not the same as it was 100 years ago or 50 years ago or even a decade ago. We fight for our ideals and we are willing to criticize ourselves when we fall short. We hold our leaders accountable and insist on a free press and an independent judiciary. We address our differences in the open space of democracy, with respect for the rule of law, with a place for people of every race and every religion and with an unyielding belief in the ability of individual men and women to change their communities and their circumstances and their countries for the better.

After nearly six years as President, I believe that that promise can help light the world. I have seen a longing for positive change — for peace and for freedom and for opportunity and for an end to bigotry — in the eyes of young people whom I have met around the globe. They remind me that no matter who you are or where you come from or what you look like or what God you pray to or whom you love, there is something fundamental that we all share.

Eleanor Roosevelt, a champion of the United Nations and America's role in it, once asked,

> "Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home — so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works."

Around the world, young people are moving forward, hungry for a better world. Around the world, in small places, they are overcoming hatred and bigotry and sectarianism. And they are learning to respect each other, despite differences.

The people of the world now look to us, here, to be as decent and dignified and courageous as they are trying to be in their daily lives. And at this crossroads, I can promise the Assembly that the United States of America will not be distracted or deterred from what must be done. We are heirs to a proud legacy of freedom, and we are prepared to do what is necessary to secure that legacy for generations to come. I ask that the Assembly join us in this common mission, for today's children and tomorrow's.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United States of America for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Uganda.

Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Museveni: First of all, I thank the General Assembly for electing His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

As the Assembly knows, the United Nations system needs reform to reflect the new needs and realities in the world today. Uganda will use the time of its presidency to make a small contribution towards the reform of the United Nations and its organs by pushing for the African agenda on that issue. Those reforms, as will be agreed by all of us, will strengthen the United Nations, not otherwise.

Africa, Uganda included, is at long last emerging from the long night of decline that the continent has been through in the last 500 years — ever since 1472, when the Portuguese started encroaching on the African coastline. Those 500 years witnessed great traumas inflicted on the African continent, including the slave trade, colonialism, neocolonialism, plunder, human haemorrhage and, in some cases, even genocide. Those traumas resulted in the haemorrhage of the population and the depopulation of the African continent to the extent that by 1900 the population of the whole of Africa was only 133 million people, while that of China, which is only one quarter of the land area of Africa, was 489,000 million people. In other words, by 1990, the population of the whole of Africa was only a quarter of that of China, in a land area four times larger.

Such traumas were possible in Africa owing not only to internal weaknesses but also external factors. Foreign aggression caused serious distortions in African societies. There was, for instance, the very-well-organized Kingdom of Kongo on the Atlantic coast at the time the first Portuguese explorer, Diego Cão, arrived there in 1483. The Kingdom covered parts of northern Angola, Cabinda, parts of the Republic of Congo and the western parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a consequence of the actions of colonialism, that polity, that Kingdom, declined and disintegrated.

It is only now that the modern countries of that area are regenerating that portion of Africa. It is those distortions and the original endogenous weaknesses of Africa that the present generation of African leaders have been addressing. In many African countries, positive results are beginning to manifest themselves. The middle class in Africa is now of the magnitude of 313 million people, and that has boosted the purchasing power of Africa to $2.5 trillion. That purchasing power is growing at the rate of 3.2 per cent per annum. That growth and expansion of the African gross domestic product and purchasing power has happened despite inadequate roads, inadequate railways, inadequate electricity, and so on. Once those strategic bottlenecks are addressed, the sky will be the limit as far as Africa's potential is concerned.

One bottleneck that has bedevilled Africa has been the espousing of the pseudo-ideology of religious or tribal sectarianism, as well as chauvinism vis-à-vis women. When President Obama was walking out, I met him at the door and told him that he had copied some of my statement. That pseudo-ideology has fuelled most of the conflicts in Africa. We are also witnessing the same pseudo-ideology causing havoc in the Middle East and North Africa. When uninformed outsiders link up with those pseudo-ideologists, the permutation is most tragic. Sectarian ideology is pseudo and bankrupt because it is at variance with the people's real interests of symbiosis and the exchange of goods and services, as well as integration for mutual benefit. Only parasites revel in such schemes. That pseudo-ideology should be banished and treated with the contempt that it deserves.

With regard to socioeconomic transformation, Uganda is busy building hard-surface roads, electricity networks, railways, information and communication technology networks, a universal education system and a pan-Ugandan health-care system. Together with our neighbours, we have integrated our markets in the East African Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. We also partner with others on common security solutions. Africa and the individual African countries are therefore becoming more credible partners with all serious actors beyond our shores.

Uganda needs and welcomes investment, trade access, tourists and, in some cases, security partnerships that are approved by the African Union with our partners in the world, many of whom are Members of the United Nations.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Uganda for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Majesty Don Felipe VI, King of Spain

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Majesty the King of Spain.

His Majesty Don Felipe VI, King of Spain, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty Don Felipe VI, King of Spain, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King Felipe (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great honour and privilege to address the General Assembly as the King of Spain at the start of my reign.

I appear before the Assembly to share with the international community my country's commitment to the universal principles and values that best define humanity. Today I have the pleasure to present what Spain — renewed but remaining true to itself and to its international commitments — can offer for peace, liberty, justice and human rights in all nations and for all persons, along with well-being and prosperity.

As a nation with ancient roots and a clear global calling, Spain has contributed intensely and decisively to shaping world history. Let us recall that Spain was present at the genesis of globalization and of international law, as well as of medieval parliamentarianism and contemporary liberal democracy. With that perspective of centuries, we see clearly that our best contributions come about when we move forward while opening up to the world.

Sincerely, despite our problems, I see Spanish society today as exemplary in its commitment to human dignity, in solidarity with the most marginalized. Spaniards harbour a profound sense of equality. They reject fanaticism, violence and intolerance and love peace. Spanish society is culturally and linguistically diverse, capable of overcoming difficulties responsibly and with integrity while demanding integrity and excellence as civic values intrinsic to democracy. Spain is a strong, generous and vigorous country, and I feel truly proud of it.

Therefore, today we Spaniards look to the future with a firm will to share and to help to build a better reality for all peoples. Our foundations are solid, forged over centuries and strengthened especially in recent decades. The commitments Spain has made with the rest of the international community are established on those foundations.

Democracy is today the essential guide of our collective coexistence. It will soon be four decades since the beginning of Spain's political transition, which allowed us to move from a dictatorship to a political system based on freedoms and rights and marked by a desire for historical reconciliation and a true spirit of harmony. Allow me, therefore, to lay claim Spain's political masterpiece with pride and emotion, an example for many in the world. We Spaniards have built a social and democratic order based on the rule of law that protects all citizens and Spain's various territories in their political, geographic, cultural and linguistic diversity. Thus Spain's firm commitment to promoting and defending democratic values in the world can always be counted on.

Without forgetting the impact of the crisis, Spain's economic development, particularly since the second half of the past century, has placed our economy among the first in the world and among the most open and competitive. Today we have achieved global leadership rankings in various sectors with a high added value and significant social impact. Bearing that in mind, Spain strongly supports a global and sustainable way of economic development that makes possible material progress and well-being, that generates employment and protects individuals and their social rights, a sustainable development model respectful of the environment, respecting international norms and with high, ethical economic values.

Spain has always been a major cultural Power. We understand that in all societies, culture shapes our identity and is a source of material and non-material wealth. The strength of Spanish, a universal language shared by dozens of countries and hundreds of millions of people on all continents, decisively contributes to guaranteeing greater cultural and linguistic diversity in the international arena. That is clearly an objective of the human community, so widely diverse, represented here. The Spanish language must therefore fully assume its formal position as an official language of the United Nations and as a working language that is fully used and represented. Given the scope and depth of our cultural base, we affirm Spain's commitment to defending cultural diversity in all of its aspects and manifestations.

Spain's history and privileged geographic position at a crossroads of continents, seas and civilizations have led it to develop a solid, universal perspective and a special connection to some regions in the world. Among them, Europe represents an obvious dimension. The process of continental integration around the European Union today is part of the national project of the Kingdom of Spain. We call for a Europe of greater unity and cohesiveness that preserves and extends the democratic and civic values that inspired its creation and that works to guarantee the prosperity of all of its citizens. We also defend a Europe that is marked by strength and solidarity that generously and effectively contributes to the peaceful progress of all regions of the world.

Due to its history and culture, the Ibero-American community of nations is a substantial part of our collective identity and represents for us a true brotherhood. That sentiment extends to other areas, thanks to the cultural, historic and linguistic connections that we also maintain with other nations and peoples in the rest of the Americas, in Africa, Asia and Oceania.

The Mediterranean, with its northern and southern shores, together with the Middle East and the entire Arab world, are areas very close to Spain, not only geographically, but also culturally and emotionally. That is why we affirm our will and interest in contributing to the stability of the region, as something fundamental for achieving peace in the world. It is a region in which some societies suffer the scourge of an intolerable barbarism, a criminal and atrocious violence that threatens all societies of the planet and the very values of universal human civilization.

Spain's global vocation and its commitments in democratic, economic and cultural matters that I have just mentioned are summarized by its full commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, on behalf of which we are convened here. The Charter represents one of the greatest achievements of humankind; we must therefore preserve, respect and enforce it. Thus Spain firmly believes in the United Nations and its multilateral mechanisms for preserving international peace and security and for contributing to the development of societies.

We live in times marked by a proliferation of conflicts, some of which are especially devastating and have indiscriminate impacts on civilians. Our primary objective must be to prevent war, and when we fail, we must protect and assist the innocent and the injured. We must never relent in our efforts to resolve conflict through diplomacy and all of the instruments bestowed by the Charter of the United Nations. Above all, we must not lose hope, and we must remember that in spite of everything, the longing for harmony can and must prevail over even the most entrenched hatreds.

A tapestry version of *Guernica* — a work by the universal Spaniard, Pablo Picasso — hangs outside the entrance to the Security Council Chamber. The scene depicted in this art icon still stirs our conscience and reminds us of the fatal consequences of our inability to prevent and resolve conflicts that afflict us all. It is a mistake to think that wars or man-made disasters affect only one community or one region without any impact on the others. When barbarism triumphs in one part of the world, no one is beyond its reach; we are all victims.

But armed conflicts are not the only threats to the international community. Evil takes many forms and their victims have many faces: every child caught in a crisis situation or in violence, every woman who is molested or whose rights are limited simply because she is a woman, every patient who dies for lack of medicine or every abandoned elderly person, every family without food and without hope because of an unjust distribution of wealth, every journalist murdered for doing his or her duty to inform — all of these are so many appeals to our conscience and to our sense of duty, and so many calls to action.

The members of the General Assembly can count on Spain as we confront, together and in the framework of international law, those who seek to destroy, through their intolerance, violence or sectarianism, the values and principles that underlie our United Nations. Spain has always demonstrated its unconditional support for the United Nations system and its active responsibility with regard to the principles that we all recognize in this Assembly: freedom, justice, equality, national sovereignty, independence and the integrity of States. Spain will continue to assume, as it has, its full responsibilities as a Member of United Nations.

Against this background, Spain is taking another step forward as a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2015-2016 biennium. Our candidacy is an integral part of my country's solid commitment to serve the international community more, and to serve it better. That is what we have done in the Security Council once every decade over the past 40 years, because the Assembly has trusted us. I only ask that that trust be renewed.

In the past 25 years, 130,000 members of the Spanish armed forces have participated in peacekeeping operations and humanitarian aid missions in all regions of the world. They have been — and, above all, have felt — part of a great collective effort to which many of the countries represented here have contributed. Similarly, in recent decades Spain has consolidated its status as one of the leading contributors to development cooperation. There is no lasting peace without lasting security, without sustainable development. There is no sustainable development without greater solidarity, both among and within nations. Furthermore, development must be accompanied by policies of inclusion that envisage the full equality of women and their incorporation in all spheres of political, social and economic life.

As we can see, Spain has a spirit of solidarity. In the past 14 years, my compatriots have contributed $30 billion to global development. Of this contribution, nearly $1 billion has been earmarked for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, through a fund set up by Spain and co-led by the United Nations Development Programme. That is the largest contribution made by a single country. Specifically, one of the most important tasks of the General Assembly at this session will be to finalize the negotiations for the post-2015 development agenda and to establish the sustainable development goals. Here, too, Spain has taken a step forward by creating the first fund that is already functioning for these sustainable development goals.

To a large extent, achieving sustainability involves fighting the harmful effects of climate change. The Climate Summit held yesterday and the recent Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Samoa — whose organization Spain contributed to — have raised our awareness even further on this issue. They also enable us to improve our response and resilience in the face of restricted situations, especially as regards the most vulnerable States whose very survival is at risk.

The sustainable development goals that we have set for ourselves are within our reach. Again, there are reasons for hope. I am thinking in particular of the progress made in Africa, a continent that is so close to Spain and where new examples of innovation and creativity are found everywhere. Africa is a continent of the present and future, where over the past decade we have seen some of the fastest-growing economies. But it is crucial to put an end to the conflicts that still afflict parts of the region and hold back its development. From the Sahel to the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, Spain contributes to ending these conflicts by meeting its commitments, which are born out of solidarity and proximity.

We believe in Africa and we are demonstrating that belief, for instance when acute crises arise such as the Ebola epidemic, which is affecting a major and growing part of the central region. I want to express the Spanish people's solidarity with the victims and our support for those who are doing everything possible to assist them, sometimes at the cost of their own lives. And I offer my own heartfelt tribute to the humanitarian aid workers of the United Nations, whose vocation leads them to leave everything behind for the most vulnerable, wherever they may be.

It has been almost 30 years since my father, King Juan Carlos, addressed this General Assembly for the first time (see A/41/PV.4). Today, as then, Spain is open to a new age. Today, as then, we take our place as active and responsible members of international community represented here. I can assure those present here that the international community, represented today in the General Assembly, can continue to count on Spain's support and active participation in the unwavering protection of the values and interests of humankind in peace, peace that is ever more prosperous and just. Spain supports a United Nations that is not only stronger but, above all, more united — more united against bigotry, intolerance and barbarism, more united in fighting poverty, hunger and marginalization, more united so that education and health can reach all, and more united in firmly defending the dignity of all human beings.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the King of Spain for the statement he has just made.

His Majesty Don Felipe VI, King of Spain, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ould Abdel Aziz (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the African Union and of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, I am pleased to express to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations and my best wishes on the occasion of your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I trust that your good judgement and your competence, as well as your extensive experience in the diplomatic leadership of your brotherly country, Uganda, constitute the best guarantee for the good conduct and success of the work of our current session.

I am also pleased to point out the remarkable work of your predecessor, Mr. John Ashe, during his leadership of the proceedings of the previous session. I would also like to express my warmest thanks to His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his tireless efforts for international peace and security and for his approach in support of dialogue as the best way to address the current international issues.

The General Assembly has always been a forum for the exchange of opinions and the discussion of important international issues that affect the lives of nations and people. That explains the privileged status that it has gained within the different institutions of the United Nations system. This annual meeting, which brings leaders together, is a valuable opportunity to seek a common understanding for a global vision, ensuring proposals for efficient solutions to the current international problems that respond to the expectations of people around the world.

In that regard, I am pleased to address this audience and to present to the world, through this forum, what we Africans have done in terms of achievements and development, the challenges facing our young continent, our expectations of the international community and our aspirations in terms of an effective contribution to addressing the current situation, humanity and the building of its future.

Several countries of the African continent have experienced high levels of growth despite the severe economic crisis that still prevails in the world. The average growth rate in the continent has reached 5 per cent and is nearing 6 per cent. That economic recovery is the result, among other factors, of the wise economic policies adopted by African Governments. The promotion of local and foreign investment, the building of new infrastructure and greater attention to the most vulnerable members of society have therefore been encouraged. Similarly, projects and income-generating activities have been supported, thereby contributing efficiently to the reduction of unemployment, in particular among young people and women. Africa is working tirelessly to change from a consumption space to a production zone in order to ensure employment opportunities for millions of its people.

The achievement of food self-sufficiency, the development of agricultural industries and poverty reduction in rural areas are core objectives of the African Union. In that regard, the agriculture and animal resources sector has received great interest during successive African summits. The year 2014 has therefore been declared the Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa. The agriculture sector employs some 60 per cent of the workforce and represents one third of the gross domestic product of the continent.

In that context, the African summit recommended that 10 per cent of the budget of African States be allocated to the development of the agriculture sector. African Governments have recognized the importance of food security and adopted efficient policies for the development of that vital sector. Such policies have achieved their objectives and have enabled some African countries to be self-sufficient in various agricultural products, while other countries are making steady progress on that path. They, too, are therefore becoming self-sufficient.

In Africa, we seek fruitful cooperation with our partners, thereby opening international markets to our agricultural products and, in that way, developing our capacities for agricultural research and providing access to developed technologies and techniques for the preservation of the environment.

When the Millennium Development Goals were adopted in 2000, Africa did not have a common vision for the major development issues. Its voice was therefore not adequately heard. Despite that, we have worked seriously and energetically to achieve those Goals. Today, Africa speaks with one voice and seeks to promote development in order to become a healthy region free of scourges, wars and conflicts, where justice, good governance and respect for human rights prevail.

In that regard, African leaders have taken important decisions on core issues for the continent, including the vision of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the post-2015 development agenda, which focuses on the development of human resources and the eradication of poverty, epidemics and deadly diseases. It must be pointed out that the fight against AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis has been strengthened through the many programmes that have helped to promote actions to reduce the effects of such scourges.

Despite such efforts, the indicators in the health sector lead us to exert every effort to strengthen our health-care system, to improve access to its services and to develop its human resources and infrastructure. In that context, African Heads of State recently launched a strong initiative to fight AIDS. The sudden outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa constitutes a major challenge owing to the rapid spread of the disease and the tragic fate of its victims. The steps taken to contain the spread of that scourge remain inadequate and are not sufficiently effective. Every day that passes until an appropriate treatment for the disease is discovered increases the number of victims and causes it to spread to new areas. Despite the measures adopted and the efforts made, to date, Africa has not managed to successfully deal with the epidemic.

I therefore appeal to the international community from this rostrum to work efficiently to provide necessary vaccines for people affected by the Ebola virus, to support measures to control its prevention and spread, and to increase investments in the field of scientific research in virology and endemic diseases, as well as to provide assistance to countries affected by that scourge. In this context, we welcome the actions and initiatives taken by some States and international organizations on behalf of the countries affected by the spread of this disease.

The phenomenon of illegal immigration and the tragedies it engenders daily prompt us to take strong action to find efficient and rapid solutions. We cannot simply count the bodies that wash up onto the beaches or undertake rescue operations at sea for thousands of migrants crammed in unsafe boats. Illegal immigration is a complex phenomenon. It is the cumulative result of economic factors and practices linked to organized crime. Consequently, no matter how closely we patrol our borders and no matter how rigorous our laws, we will not be able to prevent waves of migrants from moving from south to north. Appropriate solutions must be found that take into account the real causes of the phenomenon and that guarantee African youth increased employment opportunities and a dignified life.

Good governance is a necessary precondition for successful development efforts. The African political elite is fully aware of that fact and is committed to promoting collective freedom and consolidating democracy as the best means for managing public affairs. The African Union has taken preventive measures against attempts at usurping power by non-democratic means, including by encouraging democratic practices, establishing pluralism and organizing many transparent elections.

In its very essence, democracy implies the participation of all sectors of civil society. The nature of African societies has therefore required positive discrimination on behalf of women, allowing them access to elective office and leadership positions in order to ensure gener equality. In the same context, youth enjoys priority in development plans and in the political, social and economic policies of African countries. It is estimated that the population of the continent will reach 3 billion at the threshold of 2050; two thirds of that total will be youth. That demographic, specific to the continent, calls for a new focus on investments in infrastructure and social services, and for prioritizing such sectors as housing, employment, human resources, diversification of energy sources and health. Focus must also be placed on aligning teaching and vocational training with market needs, which will contribute to controlling unemployment and allowing youth to showcase their talents. In fact, unemployment in our societies stems less from inadequate employment opportunities than from the gap between the numbers of those trained and the actual needs of the job market.

With respect to security, we are currently facing many dangers, including the multiplication of hot spots, terrorism, organized crime and trafficking in drugs, arms and people — not only in Africa, but throughout the world. All those dangers have a cross-border nature. Some African regions have been particularly vulnerable due to the weakness of their democratic practice, the spread of ethnic conflicts, economic crises with their attendant social tensions, and the precarious situation of their educational systems, which exercerbates youth unemployment and deviation.

In order to address such challenges, the African Union has established efficient mechanisms that rely on the African peace and security architecture, including the Peace and Security Council and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises. Despite those efforts and achievements, the fight against terrorism remains an international responsibility that calls for close cooperation among all members of the international community. It is clear that no country alone can eradicate the phenomenon of terrorism.

The fruitful cooperation between the United Nations Security Council and the African Council for Peace and Security has proved effective in resolving many of the armed conflicts on our continent. Despite such efforts, however, the resolution of the situation in Somalia remains complex. Similarly, the situations in Libya, northern Nigeria and Central Africa are cause for genuine concern. In Libya, unfortunately, the situation continues to deteriorate, foreshadowing a civil war that could split the country apart, driving its people into exile and threatening to spill over into neighbouring countries. The international community must intercede to help the Libyans reach a peaceful and consensual solution that guarantees that country's unity and stability. In northern Nigeria, the Boko Haram movement continues to murder innocent people, kidnap women and destroy entire villages. Africa and the rest of the international community must join forces and take decisive action to eliminate that terrorist group, which threatens the whole region.

In the Central African Republic, the efforts of the African peacekeeping force, with the support of friendly forces, helped stop the massacres and prevented the conflict from evolving into a full-fledged civil war. However, persistent tension between the factions requires us to encourage Central African stakeholders to use this stage of the transition build trust and to overcome the remaining obstacles to that country's peace and stability.

Such situations should not lead us to overlook the peacebuilding progress that has been achieved in many conflict regions. In that regard, we commend and welcome the advances registered in the region of the Great Lakes, in northern Mali and in the Republic of South Sudan.

The Sahel was one of the first African regions to experience the phenomenon of terrorism. But thanks to the close security cooperation among the countries of the region and to international solidarity, the terrorists were repelled and the activities of illegal trafficking networks were paralysed. In North Mali, too, Africans have robustly addressed a difficult situation. Thus, several countries of the continent, along with international friendly forces, deterred terrorist groups. The risk of terrorism was eliminated from key areas from which criminal terrorist operations had been launched. The French intervention was decisive and timely. Likewise, history will remember the great sacrifices that continue to be made by the brave soldiers of Chad.

However, the region is still exposed to security risks, which for the moment are relatively contained. The eradication of terrorism in the Sahel region constitutes a major challenge additional to those impeding development and poverty reduction. There is a close correlation between development and security, because it is impossible to conceive of sustainable development without security, or security without integrated development.

In that regard, the countries of the region are aware of the need, on the one hand, to create a regional framework to coordinate development efforts and, on the other, to combat the dangers of terrorism and cross-border crime. Therefore, the Group of Five countries of the Sahel was created at the summit meeting of member States held in Nouakchott in February. The international community is invited to join Africans in their hopes and legitimate aspirations for peace, security and sustainable development.

The conflict in the Middle East, which escalates from time to time, with no hope of achieving a clear and definite solution despite multiple Arab and international initiatives, constitutes an ongoing danger to world peace. The parties in conflict must agree to make sacrifices, even painful ones. The international community must also ramp up pressure and act swiftly to find a fair solution to the conflict on the basis of relevant international resolutions, including those that guarantee the Palestinian people the establishment of an independent State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Furthermore, the dangerous situations in Syria and Iraq that have been created by the expansion of terrorism are causes of grave concern for the international community. We welcome the recent measures taken to combat terrorist groups in Iraq, and we invite the parties to the Syrian conflict to renounce violence and engage in negotiations to avoid further destruction to their country. The crisis in Ukraine must likewise be resolved peacefully and quickly in order to preserve global peace and to prevent the situation from generating tensions between the major Powers.

The African continent seeks to strengthen its presence in international forums and institutions, commensurate with its size and role, in order to make them more representative of its peoples and nations. Although the General Assembly is an international institution in which all countries are represented equally, the status of permanent member of the Security Council remains the monopoly of a restricted number of countries. That privilege, which dates back to the Second World War of the last century, no longer reflects international geopolitical reality and does not take into account the profound transformations that have taken place throughout the world. Today, Africa occupies an important position in the world and plays a distinctive role within the international community, making it a candidate for permanent representation on the Security Council. It is therefore critical to engage as soon as possible in negotiations on the rules for expanding both permanent and non-permanent representation on the Security Council.

The establishment of justice at the international level also entails reform of the world economic system to make it more equitable through greater promotion of the role of the United Nations in efforts to increase transparency, improve regulation of the financial system and promote the investment necessary to sustainable development.

Finally, I offer my sincere thanks for the efforts made to ensure the success of this session. Attaining the lofty aims for which the United Nations was established remains dependent on the freedom of the world's people to exercise their right to development, advancement and progress so that all humankind may live in dignity, freedom, justice and equality.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Her Excellency Ms. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of the Republic of Chile

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Chile.

Ms. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of the Republic of Chile, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of the Republic of Chile, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Bachelet Jeria (*spoke in Spanish*): At the end of the twentieth century, we imagined that the twenty-first century would bring greater progress and peace for all and that it would be free of the tragedies that had convulsed the world. Indeed, we have seen hopeful signs of development in many dimensions. Yet paradoxically, we see all around us the symptoms of crises that, while they may be more localized, have more devastating humanitarian consequences. These challenges include regional wars, ethnic and religious tensions, humanitarian crises, the trampling of human rights, the break-up of several States, climate change, deepening inequality, cross-border terrorism and the spread of terrible pandemics such as Ebola, all of which require a firm, urgent response on the part of the international community.

That instability, along with a lack of social cohesion, poses a threat to peace, security, human rights, development and democracy. This affects not only countries or States, but the actual men and women who inhabit them. In other words, it is a threat to all we believe in — everything that constitutes the basis of the agreement on which the United Nations was founded and everything that is our raison d'être as leaders of our societies. That is why the United Nations remains irreplaceable as an institution for addressing global challenges and for agreeing on the actions needed to resolve them, even if some of those actions have not produced the desired results.

The Security Council has contributed to addressing and preventing crises. One response has been the design of robust peacekeeping operations with a strong emphasis on the protection of civilians. However, on many occasions Council members have been unable to act with unity. That undoubtedly undermines the legitimacy and credibility of the principal organ responsible for international peace and security.

This year has seen a significant rise in the number of humanitarian crises around the world, in particular in the number of complex emergencies with regional impacts that indirectly affect already-fragile States. We are concerned about the 3 million refugees created by the crisis in Syria; about the actions of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant; about the cruel violence that the world has witnessed in Gaza. We express our solidarity with the victims and categorically condemn the use of violence. Any action in this area must be taken within the context of international law. We believe that the international community should seek political solutions and inclusive negotiations to facilitate action by the Security Council. For our part, we are prepared to increase our humanitarian commitments and shall consider accepting refugees from those conflict zones.

We are also concerned about the situation in Ukraine. Here the position of Chile is clear. We believe that the principle of territorial integrity must be respected and that, at the same time, the rights of minorities must be protected. We believe that a solution can be found to prevent an escalation of violence, sanctions and tensions that may well spread throughout the planet.

Generally speaking, we wish to reaffirm our belief in the need to respect the integrity of State borders. International law is clear and unambiguous. Any action designed to affect existing boundary treaties creates room for legal uncertainty and could jeopardize international peace and stability. In that context, we continue to believe that reform of the Security Council is a pending issue requiring political decision and swift action. We reiterate our support for the enlargement of the Council and for the aspirations of Germany, Brazil, Japan and India to become permanent members. In addition, Chile favours a serious debate on the French proposal to limit the right to veto in the case of crimes involving the responsibility to protect.

We acknowledge the Secretary-General's efforts to achieve a more inclusive global governance in which the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals occupy a central place and require the political support of Governments and societies in all regions. The post-2015 process provides a great opportunity to tackle the social and development issues common to all societies and regions, using a comprehensive approach, through specific and measurable goals. Women and peace and security is an item on the agenda of the Security Council to which Chile, as a member of the Council, attaches priority. Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the world has made progress in the protection of women and girls in armed conflicts.

Our efforts to empower women and promote initiatives to combat violence against women and girls have been tireless. Thanks to those efforts, today women are at the centre of the new development and peace architecture. We believe that the full incorporation of women in every area of society — including the economy, politics, and culture — is a prerequisite for their full development. It, therefore, should also be a priority in the post-2015 development agenda, as should early childhood development, which is something that has to do with the future of our societies.

I come from Latin America, a region of middle-income countries that has its own dreams, challenges and tasks. For us, sustainable development, security, the quality of governance and, above all, inequality and social cohesion are the most pressing problems. We want those challenges to appear in the post-2015 development agenda, which must be inclusive and reflect the situation in all regions of the world.

We believe that inequality is one of the greatest threats to countries' development and international security. It fosters social unrest and prevents us all from moving towards inclusive development and ending exclusion and poverty, which in turn can lead to resentment and violence. Therefore, overcoming inequality, with its many faces, must occupy a central place among the post-2015 development goals. We also believe that the United Nations system should have the tools for measuring specific progress in a universal agenda to combat inequality.

Chile is dealing with the challenge of inequality decisively and over the long term. Today in Chile, there is a common belief in the need for change — change specifically designed to substantially improve equity and inclusion. Having made great progress, Chile would like to consolidate and move ahead but recognizes that a society that has undergone profound and rapid changes faces new challenges.

Public opinion and political evolution tell us that the time has come to take meaningful steps through substantive reforms providing the essential basis for moving towards a more dynamic, inclusive and equitable development. That is a basic condition for moving towards a better society for all. To that end, we have recently adopted a tax reform to ensure greater equity, fiscal sustainability and the resources necessary to carry out an education reform that will ensure a quality education, free of charge, and opportunities for all. Chile will not achieve development while dragging the burden of inequality. We all know that, which is why the tax reform has received cross-cutting support.

We are also introducing long-awaited political reforms to enhance our democracy and institutional legitimacy. We have already adopted a law allowing Chileans residing abroad to vote. Progress is being made on the reform to alter the electoral system by eliminating the existing bias and motivating citizens to participate, since now every vote will count. And we want to move towards a new Constitution with fully democratic foundations and content. We launched a productivity and growth agenda to stimulate the economy, promote sustainable development and create decent jobs, as a basic prerequisite for achieving a lasting reduction in inequality and enhancing opportunities. Ultimately, we want to broaden the scope of rights to bring them into line with our enhanced capability as a country.

Climate change exacerbates inequalities and intensifies threats. There is a collective duty to act, and Chile is convinced that Latin America has a big contribution to make in this debate. Climate change aggravates inequalities because it has the greatest impact on the most vulnerable. Chile has only a marginal effect on the problem, since it accounts for only 0.25 per cent of carbon emissions, but it undoubtedly suffers the consequences of climate change, as do many others. Therefore, we want to be part of the solution. Since we understand that this entails a global commitment, differentiated actions and binding obligations, we voluntarily made a commitment to reduce our emissions by 20 per cent by 2020. Several other Latin American countries have made similar voluntary commitments. We should like to propose here that there be some type of accountability, which would facilitate compliance and would help to set an example for the countries that are lagging behind.

The Organization must ensure the efficiency and consistency of multilateralism as a special forum for tackling the major global issues in an inclusive manner, creating international regimes and promoting cooperation arrangements in priority areas for our peoples. Our country trusts multilateralism, and we believe that participating in the system involves both rights and responsibilities. Because we want to contribute to the solution of global problems, we are a member of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, we aspire to membership in the Economic and Social Council, and we are contributing to peacekeeping operations, including the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. That Mission, in which a number of Latin American countries are engaged, is a tangible action of solidarity to support the democratic consolidation of a sister country.

We believe, therefore, that it is a political imperative to strengthen multilateralism in three fundamental ways. The first is by enhancing the Secretary-General's ability to take initiatives. In the context of the functions envisaged in the Charter, it is essential to continue support for the political leadership of the Secretary-General to take preventive action and respond to urgent situations that jeopardize the dignity of people and international peace and security.

The second relates to fieldwork. The ability of the system to take action in the field is a basic prerequisite in order for the Organization to be relevant to people's demands and real problems. As the former Executive Director of UN-Women, I had the privilege of seeing the conviction, solidarity and dedication with which United Nations staff help to promote the ideals, principles and mandates of the system.

The third area of focus is development and cooperation. The process of constructing a post-2015 development agenda requires renewed efforts to provide official development assistance and to promote innovative financing mechanisms, encouraging partnerships between countries, international bodies, civil society and the private sector.

Chile is interested in a greater coordination of initiatives and instruments to facilitate South-South cooperation between middle-income countries while seeking out ways in which their essential contribution can be made effective. I would also like to note that in Chile we have enacted legal provisions to open our economy fully to imports from the 48 least developed countries, without duties or quotas.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the irrevocable commitments made by Chile's successive democratic Governments to the work of the United Nations. Those commitments reflect universal principles and values, as they promote the protection, dignity and fundamental rights of all individuals and contribute to crisis prevention, dialogue, reconciliation and post-conflict management. Our convictions and efforts will always be aimed at enhancing the legitimacy of collective action to meet people's concerns and demands. We believe that, with an effective and real effort on the part of the international community, we will be able to deal successfully with exceptional crises and, first and foremost, build a world in which all inhabitants live together in peace and dignity.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Chile for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of the Republic of Chile, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Ms. Park Geun-Hye, President of the Republic of Korea

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Korea.

Ms. Park Geun-Hye, President of the Republic of Korea, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Park Geun-Hye, President of the Republic of Korea, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Park Geun-Hye (*spoke in Korean; interpretation provided by the delegation*): Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. Kutesa, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I am confident that the Assembly will make meaningful progress during this session under your able leadership. I would also like to express my appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts to tackle the numerous crises breaking out around the globe.

Next year marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. I am prompted by the state of our world today to reflect once again upon the noble dreams and ideals that inspired the founders of the United Nations 70 years ago. The founders aspired to build a new world that places people at the centre, as the opening words of the Charter of the United Nations, "We the peoples", remind us. Throughout the ensuing decades of the Cold War and the post-Cold-War era, the United Nations tackled countless crises, striving, as it did so, to fulfil its purpose of maintaining international peace, promoting development and upholding human rights.

Yet our world continues to be beset by widespread disputes and conflicts, both large and small, despite the efforts of the United Nations. The civil conflicts raging on in Syria, Libya and South Sudan are causing the deaths of untold numbers of innocent women and children. In Iraq and surrounding areas, the activities of foreign terrorist fighters are posing new threats to peace internationally, not to mention in the Middle East. The fragile ceasefires in Gaza and Ukraine call for more fundamental and lasting solutions. The recent Ebola outbreak in Africa, widespread poverty and natural disasters underscore the scope of the threat from multiple challenges.

In order to push back against those challenges to peace and development, we need to return to the founding spirit of the United Nations by putting people first and promotinge cooperation among the Members of the family of nations. To meet the aspirations of the international community for justice and common prosperity, the United Nations needs to continue to play a central role in arranging more rapid and efficient responses.

The Republic of Korea was founded in 1948 with the blessing of the United Nations. It was able to safeguard freedom and democracy during the Korean war that broke out two years later, again with the help of the United Nations. Once a country that barely managed to survive with United Nations assistance, the Republic of Korea is today a nation that has achieved both an advanced market economy and democracy. In the course of that journey, the Republic of Korea came to espouse the values upheld by the United Nations — peace, development and human rights — as its own vision.

Given its history, the Republic of Korea is no stranger to the agonies of the civil wars, aggression, poverty and humanitarian disasters that are unfolding around the world. That is why the Republic of Korea is actively working to serve international peace and promote human rights and sustainable development as a member of the three major Councils of the United Nations: the Security Council, the Human Rights Council and the Economic and Social Council.

The developments unfolding in the Middle East, Eurasia, and North-East Asia are a far cry from the peaceful and just world that was envisioned by the United Nations founders. Overcoming the instability and chaos we see today must start with our adherence to the fundamental order and norms of the international community, namely, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; refraining from the threat or use of force in violation of the Charter; and respect for human rights and humanitarian values.

We need to prevent the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons, which pose a fundamental threat to international peace and security. In that regard, we welcome the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons through the joint efforts of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the progress being made in addressing the Iranian nuclear issue.

By the same token, I would underline the urgency of resolving the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue, which presents the single greatest threat to peace on the Korean peninsula and in North-East Asia. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the only country to have conducted a nuclear test in the twenty-first century. Its nuclear programme not only is a serious threat to international peace, but also amounts to a total rejection of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is the backbone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must make the decision to give up its nuclear weapons. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should follow in the footsteps of other countries that have abandoned their nuclear weapons in favour of reform and opening-up, and it must choose a different path that supports its economic development and improves the lives of its people. Should it do this, the Republic of Korea, together with the international community, will provide our strong support for developing the economy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In addition to that serious challenge on the Korean Peninsula, North-East Asia is undergoing a difficult transition. There are growing tensions in the region surrounding issues of history, territory and maritime security. Yet, unlike other regions, North-East Asia lacks a mechanism for dealing with those problems through multilateral consultations. It is against that backdrop that I am seeking to advance a North-East Asia peace and cooperation initiative that is aimed at building an order of trust and cooperation in the region. In my view, building up habits of cooperation in practical areas, such as climate action, disaster relief, nuclear safety and tackling transnational crime, can materialize into a multilateral process of cooperation along the lines of what we see in Europe.

In that context, I have also proposed creating a North-East Asia nuclear safety consultative body to discuss nuclear safety issues, a topic of shared interest for the countries in the region. At the same time, we are reaching beyond North-East Asia and seeking to build transportation and energy networks across an economically interdependent Eurasia, which would help strengthen political trust and security across the continent.

This year marks 20 years since the Rwandan genocide, the world's greatest humanitarian tragedy of the late twentieth century. The international community had pledged "never again" in the aftermath of the genocides in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the 1990s. Yet, we are witnessing today a different type of humanitarian disaster unfolding in Syria and Iraq. The Republic of Korea is actively participating in the efforts of the United Nations to prevent such humanitarian tragedies. The Republic of Korea strongly supports United Nations policies to protect human rights, such as the Rights Up Front initiative and the Secretary-General's "open gate" policy. Even as we speak, Korean troops are taking part in United Nations peacekeeping missions in South Sudan and Lebanon, helping with peacebuilding, reconstruction and the protection of civilians and human rights.

The Republic of Korea also attaches great importance to preventing human suffering, particularly of women and children, who are most vulnerable, in conflict situations. In that context, during its presidency of the Security Council in February 2013, Korea presided over an open debate (see S/PV.6917) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and helped raise global awareness. Korea is also participating in and championing the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative. Sexual violence against women during armed conflicts is a clear violation of human rights and humanitarian norms, regardless of how long ago or where it occurred.

The human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is also the subject of profound interest and concern for the international community. In March, the Human Rights Council adopted recommendations proposed by the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the international community should take the necessary measures to implement those recommendations. In that regard, the United Nations office that will soon be set up in the Republic of Korea to investigate human rights abuses in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is expected to reinforce such efforts. The international community should also pay greater attention to the human rights situation of North Korean defectors. The relevant United Nations agencies and countries should provide the necessary support so that defectors can freely choose their resettlement destination.

The challenges facing humankind today, such as absolute poverty and climate change, can be addressed only through a concerted international response, given their complexity and intertwined character. Less than 500 days remain until the target date of the Millennium Development Goals, which was launched with the aim of eradicating absolute poverty and increasing social and economic opportunities. The Republic of Korea is ready, by harnessing our unique historical experience, to play a bridging role between developed and developing countries as the post-2015 development goals are set. In that regard, the decision was made as a result of the Busan Partnership agreement, adopted at the Ministerial Meeting in April in Mexico, to turn the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation into an international development cooperative mechanism.

The Republic of Korea will seek to enhance the quality of its overseas assistance. We will continue to share our development experience, by globally promoting the Saemaul movement model, which was conducive to eradicating rural poverty in Korea through the spirit of diligence, self-reliance and cooperation. Having seen the power of education in propelling its own development, the Republic of Korea strongly supports and is championing the Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative. Korea will share its lessons learned and provide substantive support to the United Nations initiatives on education, which is one of the main themes of the post-2015 development goals. To that end, Korea will host the World Education Forum in 2015 and make efforts to reach an agreement on the new education objectives for the next 15 years.

Climate change is no less an existential threat to humanity than the question of war and peace. At the Climate Summit 2014 held at United Nations Headquarters yesterday, 23 September, leaders proclaimed their collective resolve to reach a consensus on the post-2020 new climate regime. Going forward, an agreement must be reached on a new climate regime by the 2015 Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris. As the host country of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Green Growth Global Institute (GGGI), Korea is committed to supporting international efforts to strengthen developing countries' mitigation and adaptation capacities. Above all, we will continue to work for the full and early operationalization of the GCF and for the expansion of GGGI assistance to developing countries. Korea views the climate challenge not as a burden but as an opportunity to unleash new value, markets and jobs through technological innovation. We are nurturing new energy industries. And we hope to share the fruits of our efforts with other developing countries.

The Korean people gained independence 69 years ago, but the subsequent division of the Korean peninsula precluded its membership in the United Nations as a single sovereign State. The two Koreas were admitted separately as Member States to the United Nations in 1991. Having two separate seats despite a single language, culture and history is clearly not normal. This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, but the Korean peninsula remains stifled by a wall of division. Countless separated families have been spending decades in agony, longing to see their loved ones. Every year, many leave for a place where they will never be able to meet their loved ones in person. I call on the international community to stand with us in tearing down the world's last remaining wall of division.

Not long ago, I proposed to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that we build corridors that can connect our environment, our livelihoods and our culture. In my view, a genuine community that can heal the wounds of division and move both sides forward together will come about only when people from the South and the North are able to live in natural harmony within a single ecosystem, when separated families are able to come together and ease their agony, and when culture is shared.

Today, the Korean peninsula is divided by a 4-kilometre wide, 250-kilometre long demilitarized zone (DMZ). The DMZ, built around the military demarcation line to prevent renewed conflict, has in reality ended up preventing the back-and-forth movement of people for some 60 years. But from the stretches of the DMZ would emerge, in those decades, a treasure trove of nature's wildlife. The DMZ ecosystem is a testament to the fact that the South and North are part of a single whole, one which both sides should work together to restore. And so I hope to build inside the very symbol of our division a world ecopeace park that would begin to reconnect the Peninsula's divided nature and divided people. If we can sweep away the barbed-wire fences from small areas inside the DMZ and thereby allow people from both sides to live in natural harmony, such a park could emerge as a corridor of life and peace.

I call on the United Nations to spearhead these efforts. Building a park that embodies respect for international standards and values, and doing so under United Nations auspices, with all the parties to the war on board — the two Koreas, the United States and China — would serve to ease tensions and promote the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas. A unified Korea would be a starting point for a world without nuclear weapons, offer a fundamental solution to the North Korean human rights issue and help unlock a stable and cooperative North-East Asia. Just as the unification of Germany laid the ground for a new Europe by integrating that continent, a unified Korea could set in motion a new North-East Asia. I am confident that a peacefully reunified Korean peninsula will contribute to realizing the founding purposes and values espoused by the United Nations.

Mrs. Baaro (Kiribati), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The founders of the United Nations were not deterred by the heat of war from looking to the future and planning for a peaceful post-war world. The Republic of Korea is committed to a vision of diplomacy that seeks lasting peace and unification on the peninsula and peace and development in North-East Asia and contributes to building a happier world. The Republic of Korea will do its part in that noble undertaking to ensure that the United Nations continues to safeguard our common values and cements its place at the centre of global governance.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Korea for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Park Geun-hye, President of the Republic of Korea, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Amir of the Republic of Qatar.

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Sheikh Al-Thani (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. We wish him success in his mission. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. John Ashe for his work during his presidency. And I thank His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his efforts to promote and operationalize the role of the United Nations.

The start of this year's session comes at a time when recent international developments are affecting the security and safety of all humankind. In that regard, it is essential that the United Nations live up to its role in the maintenance of international peace and security through all the mechanisms and means provided for in the Charter of the United Nations, explore every possible way of preventing conflicts and addressing their root causes, and work to settle them by peaceful means. We cannot achieve international peace and security without a dialogue based on the principle of equality and compliance with international law, implementation of the resolutions of international legality and respect for the principles of human rights and the rights of peoples.

The Middle East went through an extremely dangerous phase during the recent war on our Palestinian brothers. There are no guarantees that it will not recur. Israel continues to persist in its policies of occupation and to defy the will of the international community by confiscating land in the West Bank and building settlements in an effort to perpetuate that occupation. Humankind was shocked by the tragic scenes and unprecedented images of destruction during the latest round of aggression targeting civilians in Gaza. Babies were killed in their mothers' arms, almost half a million Palestinians were displaced and the Gaza Strip was virtually destroyed when people had hardly managed to rebuild after the destruction inflicted on Gaza during the previous war. Under international law and international humanitarian law, such acts are defined as crimes against humanity. The arrogance of power will not prevail over the resistance of the Palestinian people. I salute their steadfast resistance in the face of the occupation in Gaza and their insistence on regaining their legitimate rights. May the souls of the Palestinian martyrs rest in peace.

Israel must realize that it can achieve security for its people only through peace, and that the occupation is bound to end. The damage caused by Israel's repeated acts of aggression in the Gaza Strip in recent years, the unjust blockade imposed on it and the destruction wreaked on its infrastructure make it incumbent on the international community to compel Israel to implement internationally agreed-on resolutions, fulfil its obligations and hasten to remove every obstacle to lifting the blockade and launching the process of reconstructionn. The State of Qatar will spare no effort to provide assistance for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, and we urge every country to follow suit.

The international community's response to the aspirations of the Palestinian people to freedom and national independence is vital to affirming the justice of international legality, especially since the question of Palestine is the last remaining issue on the decolonization agenda. In that context, temporary solutions and piecemeal settlements have proved useless and unacceptable. Israel's intransigence compels us to resort to the United Nations as a framework that can accommodate all parties.

The Security Council should shoulder its moral and legal responsibilities by upholding the principles of international legality and human rights and avoiding the selectivity that has characterized its approach to this issue in recent times. It should adopt a resolution, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, forcing Israel to end its occupation of the lands it seized in 1967 and to implement the two-State solution agreed on by the international community, according to a clear and time-bound political plan, within the framework of peace negotiations leading to a permanent settlement of the Palestinian question through a two-State solution, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant internationally legitimate resolutions. The world is duty-bound to persuade the Palestinians that those who killed their children in Gaza will not be received in diplomatic forums as if they had carried out a civilized action because they had bombed Palestinians from the air without staining their hands with Palestinian blood.

The tragedy of the Syrian people, now in its fourth year, represents one of the major challenges in the Middle East. This humanitarian disaster has been exacerbated and is becoming increasingly dangerous by the lack of a clear vision for a solution to the crisis, continued acts of murder and destruction, violations of human rights, the terrible human suffering and the displacement of nearly half of the Syrian people. This makes it incumbent on the international community to strive to end the bloodshed and the systematic destruction of Syria by a regime that forces its people to choose between accepting its presence or burning down their country.

We have already warned that the continuation of the regime's policy of terrorism, genocide and displacement, as well as the failure to provide support to the Syrian revolution when it was still a civilian revolution demanding freedom and dignity, would push many Syrians to opt for self-defence. We have also warned the international community from the outset that if no action were taken about the situation in Syria, we would reach the point at which we now find ourselves. When the Syrian people defended themselves with weapons, we advocated providing them with support before the regime destroyed their country and before extremist organizations arose and flourished. No red lines were drawn to stop the actions of the Syrian regime. The world remained silent even when Syrian children and women were killed with chemical weapons and when its populated neighbourhoods were levelled with barrel bombs. Eventually, the Syrian people found themselves stuck between the grip of terrorism of the regime and that of extremist forces that thrived in the swamp of violence. The war of genocide waged and the deliberate displacement carried out by the regime remain major crimes.

Confronted by this grim reality, the international community needs to provide all aspects of humanitarian aid to the Syrian people inside and outside their areas of refuge. We reiterate our call on the Security Council to promptly shoulder its legal and humanitarian responsibilities. It must support the Syrian people against the two dangers posed by the terrorism and crimes of genocide of the regime, and by the terrorist forces that have taken advantage of the prevailing misery, bitterness and the absence of the State and the international community. The first danger has begotten the second.

Many areas of the world suffer from the terrorism being perpetrated under different pretexts and slogans that threaten the security and stability of the world and hamper the achievement of the desired development. No civilization has been spared terrorism in the modern era. There is no doubt that the most affected communities are those in which this evil seed had grown. This phenomenon is hostile to the diversity and pluralism that enrich communities. In the case of the affected Arab and Islamic societies, terrorism affects innocent people, impoverishes our societies by depriving them of humanitarian and religious diversity, muzzles the real demands of the peoples, and offends religion with its superficial and apostatic interpretations.

Therefore we must all redouble our efforts to fight this phenomenon whatever its forms, target or source might be. It has been proved beyond any doubt that terrorism can be defeated only in its social environment. If societies are to stand with us in the fight against terrorism, we need to be fair and not push them to choose between terrorism and tyranny, or between terrorism and sectarian discrimination. We cannot win the war on terror if peoples are not satisfied that it is their war and not a war to stabilize a regime that is oppressing them.

The Syrian people have suffered from tyranny and terrorism. The international community did not heed the cries for help of the Iraqi people, who have been the first victims of terrorism in Iraq. But those who fought terrorism and defeated it found themselves prone to marginalization and abuse by terrorist sectarian militias. It is therefore imperative to persuade the Iraqi people that they will not pay the a thousandfold price, and that when they defend their homeland they are merely defending their rights, dignity and freedoms, which must be guaranteed. This is what the majority of the Syrian people must be persuaded of after being soaked in the blood spilled by the Syrian regime for daring to demand freedom and dignity.

In this context, the international community needs to stand firmly by brotherly Iraq in confronting terrorism and ending its ordeal. Preserving its sovereignty, territorial integrity and the diversity of its sects can be achieved only by defusing sectarian conflict and achieving Iraqi reconciliation that lays the foundations for a society free from sectarian and ethnic conflicts, with the participation of all political forces, without exclusion.

In this context, the international community must also assist fraternal Libya in ending its current ordeal by making a serious effort to respect the will of the Libyan people and meet their legitimate aspirations for security and stability through reconciliation and the inclusion of all Libyan factions. From this rostrum, I call on all Libyan political forces to follow the path of national dialogue and to hammer out a formula for governance that meets the aspirations of the Libyan people, who have sacrificed so much for their freedom.

On this occasion, I cannot but hail the nascent Tunisian experience, which augurs well for our future and owes its progress to the awareness and unity of the Tunisians and their insistence on the success of their experiment, despite continuous attempts by Powers that do not want pluralism to succeed in our region. Another successful instance of the peaceful transfer of power has been seen in Yemen. We were encouraged by the outcome of the national dialogue under the auspices of the United Nations and with the support of the Security Council, which adopted a resolution emphasizing commitment to the process and condemning those undermining its implementation.

But it would seem that there are forces who are joining ranks in an attempt to thwart that experiment. Some oppose any change at all and would prefer to turn back the hands of the clock; others prefer sectarian conflict and sectarian and factional interests over justice and good governance for Yemen. Experience has shown that the use of violence and political action from a factional or sectarian perspective does not lead to a change towards a better system of governance, but poses a threat to the political entity itself.

We call on our Yemeni brothers to preserve the achievements of the young people of Yemen, and those of national dialogue and wisdom, and not to abandon what they have accomplished. They must not allow anyone to drag them onto the path of sectarian violence. We also call on the United Nations to work on implementing its decisions on the achievements of the national dialogue, including rebuilding the army so that it can defend the legitimate institutions and stop the phenomenon of armed militias in Yemen. It has become clear that such forces would lead to civil strife and derail the process of peaceful transition.

Many countries of the world still suffer from poverty and face difficulties in promoting their development at the desired pace. This holds true for the new post-2015 sustainable development goals, which constitute a common vision for future generations. I stress that the State of Qatar will pursue its efforts to build a partnership with the United Nations in order to adopt a post-2015 development plan that meets the aspirations of the peoples of all countries and regional blocs.

I would also like to note that the State of Qatar has made progress in its national development plans and strengthened its regional and global partnerships, as confirmed by the United Nations 2014 Human Development Index. The State of Qatar has been ranked thirty-first globally, and today we continue the implementation of the comprehensive national strategy for human development based on the Qatar Vision 2030, aimed at achieving development in various fields.

The State of Qatar will pursue its active policy of providing a space for dialogue in areas of conflict and for mediation between the various parties, as we believe in solving conflicts by peaceful means and have established a tradition of peaceful mediation. We will continue to provide a platform for dialogue among political currents, cultures and religions.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the State of Qatar to work with the United Nations to address common challenges and achieve the goals we all seek.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank His Highness the Amir of the State of Qatar for the statement he has just made.

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Serzh Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Armenia.

Mr. Serzh Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Serzh Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Sargsyan (*spoke in Armenian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): We are meeting at a symbolically significant time, between the 100th anniversary of the First World War and the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Seven decades ago, at the end of the Second World War, the United Nations was established. Its mission was to form a new environment for civilization and culture in order to prevent the repetition of the previous tragic events of history.

The year 2015 is of particular significance for all Armenians around the world. On 24 April, Armenians around the globe will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the most tragic page in the nation's history: the Armenian genocide. It was an unprecedented crime, the objective of which was to eliminate the nation and deprive it of its homeland, and it remains an unhealed wound for every Armenian. The 1915 genocide was a crime against civilization and humanity, and its inadequate condemnation paved the way for similar crimes of mass murder in the future.

Addressing the Assembly ahead of that 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide from this rostrum, which I would call the podium of honour and responsibility, I declare our profound thanks to Uruguay, France, Russia, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Greece, Slovakia, Cyprus, Lebanon, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, Canada and the Holy See. We thank them for their recognition and condemnation of the Armenian genocide, regardless of the form it took or the language used to express it. I thank the United States of America, the European Union and all those personalities, State bodies, territorial units and organizations in many countries that publicly called things by their proper name. That is indeed extremely important, since denial is an integral part of the crime of genocide.

For an entire century now, Armenians around the globe and the entire progressive international community have been waiting for Turkey to show courage and face its own history by recognizing the Armenian genocide, thus relieving future generations of the heavy burden of the past. Alas, instead, we continue to hear ambiguous and messages with ulterior motives, in which the victim and the slaughterer are set on equal footing and history is falsified.

Armenia has never made recognition of the Armenian genocide a condition for the normalization of bilateral relations with Turkey. In fact, Armenia was the party that initiated that process of normalization, which in 2009 culminated in the signing of the Zurich protocols. However, those protocols have been shelved for years now, awaiting ratification in the Turkish Parliament. Ankara has declared publicly that it will ratify the protocols only if Armenians cede Nagorny Karabakh and Artsakh to Azerbaijan. In Armenia and Artsakh, ordinary people often simply retort: "To hell with your ratification." This vernacular phrase summarizes the age-old struggle of the entire nation and unequivocally explains to those who attempt to bargain with others' homeland that the motherland is sacrosanct and they had better stay away from us with their bargain. It is in these circumstances that, currently, Yerevan is seriously considering the issue of recalling the Armenian-Turkish protocols from Parliament.

The tragic events in Syria and Iraq that we are currently witnessing demonstrate how groups whose creed is hatred are targeting religious and national minorities. Two days ago, on Armenia's independence day, the Saint Martyrs Armenian Church in Dayr Al-Zour, Syria, dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Armenian genocide, was mined and blown up by the terrorists. Such barbarity is a criminal demonstration of godlessness, which is in no way or shape related to any faith. The catastrophic situation in Syria and northern Iraq continues to deteriorate, and today hundreds of thousands of people are directly in peril. Among them are tens of thousands of Armenians in Aleppo, Syria. It is one instance to consider in the context of our joint commitment to preventing crimes against humanity. Armenia has voiced on numerous occasions the need to defend the Armenian population of Syria and the Yazidi population of north-western Iraq, and we are encouraged by the unified stance of the international community in that regard.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the essence of our Organization. In recent years, Armenia has consistently consolidated its peacekeeping capabilities thereby preparing ourselves for more proactive engagement in that field. Armenian peacekeepers will very soon be dispatched to the south of Lebanon in the context of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. The close collaboration we enjoy with our Italian colleagues enabled our participation in that endeavour. I strongly believe that our servicemen will fulfil their mission with dignity and a high level of professionalism and will use the extensive experience they have garnered in the last decade in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan.

It has been more than 20 years that our neighbouring State, through its unconstructive and maximalist stance, has thwarted the international community's efforts aimed at the just and peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The bellicose declarations and various threats made at the highest level in Azerbaijan have been completely tolerated on account of the international community's failure to correctly assess them. The President of Azerbaijan has designated the entire Armenian nation as enemy number one, and what is considered in the rest of the world to be a crime, in Azerbaijan is considered to be a heroic act.

Despite the fact that each conflict is unique, fundamental human rights and freedoms, including peoples' right to freely express their will and self-determination, continue to evolve as a determinant in their resolution. The vote held a few days ago in Scotland once again proved that nowadays referendums are more and more widely perceived as a legal model for the peaceful settlement of ethnic conflicts. It was no coincidence that the right to decide one's own fate through a referendum is at the core of the proposal put forward by the co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

While discussing the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement, I must address the four Security Council resolutions — resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) — adopted during the war, which every so often are exploited by the Azerbaijani authorities in order to justify their obstructionist policy. Those four resolutions demand, as a matter of priority, the unconditional cessation of all military hostilities. Azerbaijan has failed to comply. Azerbaijan's own non-compliance with the fundamental demands of the resolutions make their full implementation impossible. The resolutions call on the parties to cease their bombardments and air strikes targeting the peaceful civilian population and to refrain from violating the principles of international humanitarian law. However, Azerbaijan has continued its indiscriminate bombardments of the civilian population. Azerbaijan has not spared children, women or the elderly, thereby gravely violating all legal and moral norms of international humanitarian law. Now Azerbaijan cynically refers to those resolutions selectively — citing them out of context as a prerequisite for the settlement of the conflict. An adequate interpretation of the

Security Council resolutions is not possible without a correct understanding of the hierarchy of the demands set therein.

The resolutions, inter alia, request the restoration of economic, transport and energy links in the region and the removal of all obstacles to communications and transportation. It is no secret that Azerbaijan and Turkey imposed a blockade on Nagorno Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia at the outset of the conflict. In his statements, the Azerbaijani President even takes pride in that fact, promising his public that such action would remain the priority of Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

The aforementioned Security Council resolutions call on Azerbaijan to establish direct contacts with Nagorno Karabakh. Azerbaijan has refused to establish any direct contacts with Nagorno Karabakh, which was a legally equal party to the ceasefire agreement concluded in 1994, as well as a number of other international agreements. Moreover, Azerbaijan preaches hatred towards the people it claims it wants to see as a part of its State.

None of the Security Council resolutions identifies Armenia as a conflicting party. Our country is called upon only to continue to exert its influence over the Nagorno Karabakh Armenians in order to put an end to the conflict. Armenia has fully complied, and due to its efforts a ceasefire agreement was concluded in 1994. All Security Council resolutions refer to Nagorno Karabakh as a party to the conflict.

The Azerbaijani authorities have failed to implement the fundamental demands of the Security Council resolutions, including abiding by and adhering to the humanitarian norms. Incidentally, Azerbaijan has occasionally gravely violated that demand. Azerbaijan's cruel and inhumane treatment of Armenian civilian prisoners of war regularly results in their deaths, although I imagine that no one would be surprised about that, since Azerbaijan is the very State that suppresses and exercises the most inhumane treatment of its own people. A clear proof of that was the decision of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture to suspend its visit to Azerbaijan due to the obstructions it encountered in the conduct of the official Baku.

The OSCE Minsk Group is the only specialized structure that has been dealing with the Nagorno Karabakh issue according to the mandate granted by the international community. While Azerbaijan knows that it could not possibly deceive or misinform the Minsk Group, which is well aware of the essence of the problem, it attempts to transpose the conflict settlement to other platforms by trying to depict it as a territorial dispute or exploiting the factor of religious solidarity. That is ironic, since Armenia traditionally enjoys very warm relations with the Islamic nations, both in the Arabic-speaking world or, for instance, with our immediate neighbour Iran.

We highly value the indispensable role of the United Nations in the adjustment and implementation of the development goals. I strongly believe that, through the new post-2015 development agenda, we will continue our efforts to seek solutions and respond to global challenges, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that we have covered a substantial part of the path towards the shaping of the post-2015 development agenda and we will continue our endeavours in that regard, displaying the flexibility necessary to bring the process to its logical conclusion.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Armenia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Serzh Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Al Sisi (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, it gives me pleasure to congratulate the President of the Assembly and his friendly country on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. We are confident that he will lead its work wisely, and we will lend him our support as he undertakes his duties. I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to his predecessor for his untiring efforts as President of the Assembly at its previous session. I also reiterate our full support to the Secretary-General as he strives to realize the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

I stand before the Assembly today as one of the sons of Egypt, from the cradle of human civilization. From this rostrum, I first salute the great people of Egypt. Allow me to also salute the thousands of Egyptians who travelled from Egypt and various parts of the United States and who are in the city today to say that the new Egypt is coming. From this rostrum, I salute the great people of Egypt, who have made history twice in the past few years: first, when they revolted against corruption and despotism and claimed their right to freedom, dignity and social justice; and then when they held fast to their identity and, energized by patriotism, rose up against exclusion, refusing to succumb to the tyranny of a faction which, in the name of religion, put its narrow interests before the interests of the people.

Those are simply snapshots of the defining moments Egypt has witnessed recently. They are only milestones in the longer journey that Egyptians, fuelled by their dreams and aspirations, have embarked upon, towards a better day and a more prosperous future. The world is starting to grasp the reality of what happened in Egypt and to understand the circumstances that drove Egyptians to intuitively take to the streets to rebel against the forces of extremism and darkness that, once in power, undermined the foundations of the democratic process and national institutions and sought to impose a state of polarization in order to break the unity of the people.

The upsurge in extremism and violence perpetrated in the name of religion that the region is currently witnessing is evidence of the true objectives of those groups that exploit religion. We have warned against them over and over again. They have transformed the values of justice, compassion and mercy, which are treasured by Judaism, Christianity and Islam, into grim sectarianism and destructive civil and regional wars that continue to claim the lives of innocent people of different religions.

The Egyptian people understand — as do I, given the responsibilities that I have shouldered since my election as President — that the path towards achieving our goals began with the building of a civil democratic State, guided by the principles we sought to embody and adhering to the road map for the future agreed upon by the Egyptian national powers. That road map will be completed when parliamentary elections are held, following the presidential election and constitutional referendum through which Egyptians expressed their free will. Our aim is to build a new Egypt — a State that respects rights and freedoms, honours its duties and ensures the coexistence of its citizens without exclusion or discrimination; a State that respects and enforces the rule of law, guarantees freedom of opinion for all and ensures freedom of belief and worship for its people; and a State that is determined to achieve growth, prosperity and a promising future that meets the aspirations of its people.

To that end, Egypt began implementing an ambitious comprehensive programme to spur development until 2030, with the aim of laying the foundations of a free-market economy that is capable of attracting investments in a secure and stable environment. The New Suez Canal project, a gift from Egyptians to the world, is proof of the seriousness of our intent and of the resolve of the new Egypt to forge a better tomorrow for its youth. That is why I invite members to participate in the economic conference that will be held in Egypt in February 2015 to achieve development and build the future, not only for Egypt, but for the entire region.

Those steps briefly reflect the gist of the social contract embraced by Egyptians in their new Constitution. It is to build a better today and a brighter tomorrow for our youth and to establish a State that is armed with strong institutions and governed by the rule of law; a State that respects the judiciary and ensures its independence and applies the principle of the separation of powers; and a State that is not held back by a form of terrorism that thinks that it can conquer and repress our nation.

Egypt has suffered from the scourge of that terrorism since the 1920s, when it concealed its poisonous viewpoints behind religion to reach power and establish the caliphate state, relying on armed violence and terror to achieve its objectives and in the process giving rise to a handful of extremists who commit atrocities in the name of religion. Here I stress that we should not allow them to abuse Islam and offend the 1.5 billion Muslims who cherish its noble values. Religion, by virtue of its holiness and sanctity, cannot be put to the test by humans and judged whether it has succeeded or failed.

Terrorism is a plague that does not differentiate between developing and developed societies as it spreads. Terrorists come from different societies. They are not bound together by any true religious faith. That is why it is imperative that we all intensify our cooperation and coordination efforts, pursuant to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in fulfilment of its objectives, to end the support provided to those terrorist organizations that enables them to continue perpetrating crimes.

The problems facing our region emanate from the space provided to the local and regional forces of extremism and the state of polarization that often leads to division and strife. They have become a serious danger that threatens the very existence of the State and attacks its identity. That has produced fertile ground for terrorism and its organizations to grow and gain influence.

In this regard, the crises facing some countries of the region could be resolved by following a two-pronged approach aimed at building the nation State. The first is the application of the principles of equality of all citizens and respect for the rule of law, based on a social contract and national consensus, while ensuring the enjoyment by all of all rights, especially the right to development. That will safeguard societies from exploitation and prevent them from succumbing to extremism. The second aspect is a decisive confrontation with the forces of extremism and terrorism and with any attempt to impose opinions through intimidation and violence or to force exclusion through rejection in all its forms.

Egypt, in agreement with Libya's neighbouring countries, has put forward an initiative that sets specific steps and a clear horizon to end the plight of that kindred country. We can build on that initiative to achieve a comprehensive political solution that strengthens Libya's elected institutions and ensures an end to the bloodshed, while preserving its territorial integrity. Success requires effectively halting arms trafficking into Libya and dealing relentlessly with the extremist movements that resort to weapons and violence and do not recognize the democratic process.

Despite the heartrending humanitarian situation in fraternal Syria and the destruction and loss of innocent lives resulting from the crisis, I am confident that it is possible to establish a political framework that will ensure that the aspirations of the Syrian people are met without compromising with terrorism or replicating the circumstances that the Syrians initially rebelled against. I emphasize that Egypt supports the Syrian people's aspirations to a safe life that ensures Syria's stability and the unity of its people and preserves its territorial integrity.

The formation in the brotherly country of Iraq of a new Government approved by the Parliament is a significant development that restores hope in the possibility of improving the situation and for success in internal and external attempts to achieve stability, restore the areas have fallen under the control of the terrorist group Daesh, maintain Iraq's territorial integrity, end the bloodshed and realize the hopes and aspirations of the Iraqis and their efforts to restore security and stability in the country.

Despite the multitude of crises threatening our region, some of which I have mentioned, the Palestinian issue remains a top priority for Egypt. Palestinians still aspire to establish their independent State on the territories occupied in 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the principles of the peace process that was established in the 1970s, following an Egyptian initiative. Those principles are not up for negotiation; otherwise the basis of a comprehensive peace in the region would erode and the values of justice and humanity would vanish. The continued deprivation of the Palestinian people of their rights is undoubtedly exploited by some to inflame other crises, achieve hidden goals, fragment Arab unity and impose control on Palestinians under the guise of realizing their aspirations.

All of these factors place a special responsibility on Egypt, and on the strength with which it confronted terrorism and extremism in the 1990s. I am confident that certain challenges will require us to work seriously and with a clear vision to achieve the ambitions of our people for democracy and human dignity and for our youth and their aspirations for a brighter future. Our success will guarantee the future of our people.

From this rostrum, I call upon everyone to address the Ebola epidemic. In many African countries, combatting the disease is a collective responsibility. We must be able to assist those countries that need help while providing protection to our own people. Distances have become shorter, due to modern advances, thus increasing the threat. As a strong State, Egypt bears a special responsibility. In the 1990s, Egypt confronted terrorism and extremism. I am confident that it will succeed in uprooting terrorism by virtue of its national identity. Egypt will always be a beacon of civilization, supporting cohesion in the region. Egyptians will never hesitate to assume their role to that effect.

Egypt considers the security of the Arab States integral to its national security, on the basis of our common heritage and destiny and our longing for the stability of a region that is crucial to the world. Egypt's vision of international relations is founded on respect for the principles of international law, treaties and conventions, based on mutual respect and mutual interests and benefits.

As the Assembly knows, Egypt was a founding Member of the United Nations and has ever since strongly contributed to realizing its goals, especially in peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development. From that standpoint, Egypt's aspiration to a non-permanent seat on the Security Council in 2016 and 2017 stems from its desire to use its membership to achieve the purposes of the Organization and protect the interests of developing countries, especially in Africa, as well as to accelerate the reform of the United Nations system as part of a broader vision based on the principle of equality of all nations. I therefore invite Member States to support Egypt's candidature for the Security Council.

I have conveyed in all humility the message of the Egyptian people, women, men, youth and the elderly. It is a message of hope, of will and of determination to work. It is a message of openness, calling for cooperation with all, to overcome all obstacles and difficulties. I wish to assure the Assembly that the Egyptian people, after their two revolutions, have become the sole source of our internal and external policies in pursuit of stability and development.

Egypt today has regained its self-confidence and is upholding the principles of law and freedom. With its Arab identity and African roots, it is the cradle of the Mediterranean civilization and the beacon of moderate Islam. Egypt aspires to resolve regional disputes and uphold the principles of justice and humanity in today's world. I am confident that Egyptians have an infinite capacity to give. We have inherited that gift from our ancestors and will remain ever generous, God willing.

Long live Egypt. Long live the peace-loving peoples of the world. Long live the principles of humanity and the values of tolerance and coexistence. May peace be upon the Assembly, and the mercy and blessings of God as well.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King Abdullah (*spoke in Arabic*): What and where is global power? I say that global power is here in this Hall, and it is ours if our countries work as one. That is the great promise of the General Assembly. The times demand that we exercise that power now and to the full.

In my region, the challenges have grown significantly since I spoke here last year (see A/68/PV.5). Those who say "This is not our business" are wrong. The security of every nation will be shaped by the fate of the Middle East. Together, we can and must undertake urgent humanitarian and security measures, create durable solutions for today's crises and provide new opportunities for dialogue, reconciliation, prosperity and peace.

The terrorists and criminals targeting Syria, Iraq and other countries today are extreme reflections of a global threat. Our international community needs a collective strategy to contain and to defeat those groups. My country is at the forefront of that effort. We are leading a number of initiatives to counter extremism. As the representative of the Asia-Pacific bloc on the Security Council, we seek a strong outcome of the Security Council summit on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, to be chaired by President Obama this afternoon.

Another critical global focus must be a decisive affirmation of mutual respect within and among religions and peoples. The teachings of true Islam are clear: sectarian conflict and strife are utterly condemned. Islam prohibits violence against Christians and the other communities that make up each country. Let me say once again that Arab Christians are an integral part of my region's past, present and future. I call on Muslim and other leaders to work together against falsehoods and divisive actions.

Jordan is honoured to have spearheaded global interfaith and intrareligious initiatives. Building on that, Jordan will introduce a draft resolution covering the general proposal that a new international offence, falling under the crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity, be considered on the basis of the aberrant new crimes against religious communities seen recently in Syria and in Iraq.

Together, let us also address the conditions that extremists exploit. Radicalization thrives on injustice, insecurity and marginalization. The Assembly's transformative development agenda can give the world's people a better way forward through concrete programmes and investments that will change lives.

We must also work actively for consensus-driven political solutions to regional crises. The security situation in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon must be addressed comprehensively. Jordan supports a united and stable Iraq with an inclusive national political process. In Syria, there must be a political solution based on reforms that give all communities a role in rebuilding their country. International influence is vital to bring the moderate opposition and the regime back to the negotiating table immediately.

The heavy flow of Syrian refugees continues. My country is sheltering nearly 1.4 million Syrians. We are now host to the world's third-largest number of refugees, and that is placing an overwhelming burden on Jordan's people, infrastructure and already limited resources. The refugee crisis is a recognized global responsibility and demands a global solution. To date, the response has not kept pace with the real needs. There must be a concerted effort to get humanitarian assistance flowing inside Syria and to support host countries and communities, including Jordan.

We cannot address the future of my region without addressing its central conflict: the denial of Palestinian rights and statehood. This year, yet again, we have seen a dangerous halt in the progress towards peace and a Palestinian State. Instead, in Gaza, we have seen another violent detour into conflict. How shall we heal the families who have lost so much? How shall we offer hope to young people whose futures are at risk? A first imperative step is to mobilize international efforts to rebuild Gaza. As we do so, we must also marshal the united global response needed to achieve a once-and-for-all lasting settlement. Such action can create the environment necessary to relaunch the final status negotiations on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative.

That approach offers a clear path — the only path — to a comprehensive settlement based on the two-State solution, international legitimacy and the terms of reference. For Israel, it offers security and normal diplomatic and economic relations with Arab and Muslim States and, for Palestinians, a viable and independent sovereign State, within the 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Unilateral actions that seek to pre-empt negotiations must end. Jordan strongly opposes threats to the Arab, Muslim and Christian identity of Jerusalem. As the Hashemite custodian of Jerusalem's Muslim and Christian Holy Sites, I will continue to oppose any violation of the sanctity of the Al-Aqsa mosque.

The people of Palestine seek what all humans seek. It is the common cause of the General Assembly: justice, dignity, opportunity and hope. That is our global responsibility. It is in our global power, and we must make it our global reality. Jordan stands ready to do its part.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank His Majesty the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the statement he has just made.

His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. François Hollande, President of the French Republic

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the French Republic.

Mr. François Hollande, President of the French Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United

Nations His Excellency Mr. François Hollande, President of the French Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Hollande (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will understand that I am speaking today with particular emotion, because one of my compatriots has just been the subject of a cowardly assassination in Algeria by a terrorist group linked to Daesh. His name was Hervé Gourdel. He was a man full of enthusiasm who loved mountains and thought that he would be able to pursue his passion by going to the Djurdjura area in Algeria. He was captured, and he was decapitated. That is what terrorism does. And it does not do that only to France. Several days ago it was American and British individuals subjected to the same barbarity.

That group — Daesh — does not strike only those who think differently from themselves; they also strike Muslims, they strike civilian populations, and they strike minorities. They rape, they kill. That is why the battle that the international community must wage against terrorism knows no borders. The same flag must be carried, that of the United Nations, that of the values for which this Organization was founded — human dignity, freedom, the vision we must have of a world of tomorrow, a world of justice.

France is fully engaged in this battle. That was the case in Africa when it was called to Mali, where, fortunately, it was joined by many African and European countries and now by the United Nations. France has been engaged whenever there is a risk. But today it is in Iraq and Syria where that threat exists. But it does not concern that region alone, because the Daesh group has decided not only to conquer territory, imagining that it will found a State; it threatens the entire world by provoking attacks, organizing kidnappings and recruiting fighters from around the world to train them and show them the barbarity of which the group is capable, so they may reproduce that horrific terrorist movement in our own countries.

It is because this threat exists not only for the region but for the world that France responded to the Iraqi authorities' appeal to provide them first with military aid through the delivery of weapons this past August and also with aerial support to keep the Daesh group from being able to continue its advance. We want to weaken it. We want to quash it.

But we also know that as long as there is no settlement of the Syrian crisis, all our efforts risk being undermined. So the challenge is not only to act against Daesh, but also to achieve a political solution. We in France support the democratic Syrian opposition. We consider it the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people. In that case, too, we will not back down; we will not compromise because of threats. The Bashar Al-Assad regime deserves to be condemned because they are complicit in what has been going on for the past three years in Syria — 200,000 deaths and so many displaced persons.

This is a sad time for France, with the death — the murder — of one of our citizens, but France will never give in to blackmail, pressure or barbarous acts. On the contrary, France knows what is expected of it. France knows that it upholds values, France knows it has a role to play and will never abandon that role, and that the fight against terrorism will be continued and expanded as much as necessary within respect for the rule of law and the sovereignty of States, for we make no mistake when we act. We will always act with respect for the principles of the United Nations.

I also wanted to talk to about other things, but it must be understood that a great question is being asked of my country and also of the Assembly. When faced with barbarism, with terrorism, will we remain spectators, or will we be actors together in what should be a just international order? The question, if we do not respond to it, or if we respond too weakly, then terrorists will continue their business of recruitment and indoctrination. It is not weakness that will be the response to terrorism; it is force — the force of law, the force of the United Nations. At a certain point also, it will be the force of military action when it becomes necessary.

I also wanted to talk about other regions of the world that are facing threats that also affect our own security. I want to talk to the Assembly about the Ebola epidemic, because I know just how much it is affecting our African friends. But again, let us look beyond those who are affected. Who can imagine that the epidemic will remain confined to just a few countries if we do not intervene? It is also a global threat. Again, the response must be a global. Therefore, France, Europe and the world must provide to the countries affected by the epidemic the necessary medical care, indispensable protection and economic assistance that is expected. Because again, if there is the slightest weakness, the slightest failure to show solidarity, all of our countries will be affected.

I have also come here before the General Assembly to speak about what is happening in Europe and next to Europe, to speak about what occurred in Ukraine and the failures there to uphold principles of international law. But what is at stake today, even in Europe, is peace and ensuring that the ceasefire that was agreed can be transformed into a lasting solution to the conflict.

No continent has been spared from any threat. Everything is fragile, everything is precarious, everything is vulnerable. We have to have the same awareness of the risks, the dangers and the perils that we had right after the Second World War. We must not think that all we have to do is remember; we have to think of the future, of the world we want. The world that we want is the final subject I wish to address here.

The world that we want has to be one of profound change. The present disorder also threatens not only our generation but naturally those that will follow us. It threatens our very security, as there are more displaced persons resulting from climate imbalance than from wars, which are sadly so intense and deadly on our planet. France has lived up to its responsibilities in that area too. We decided to organize the climate conference in December 2015. I am pleased that thanks to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, there was a summit here that mobilized awareness, States, financial institutions, businesses and civil society. Many events took place. We have to succeed at the Paris conference, not because it will take place in Paris, but because it is the world's appointment with itself.

There are periods in history when we have the power to decide, and decide not just for ourselves but for humankind. This is one of those moments. Therefore in Paris, we have to do everything can be done to reach a comprehensive, binding agreement that differentiates according to levels of development, everything so that there can be that Green Climart Fund, to which France has contributed $1 billion for the coming years. I hope that other countries follow our example, because we need that Green Fund to allow less developed countries to grow and to succeed in their energy transition at the same time.

This is a sad moment that I am living today on behalf of France, that the French are experiencing, but it is also a moment of awakening and responsibility. For the world, for the planet, we must fight terrorism, we must act in favour of peace, we must reduce inequalities, we must also do our duty for future generations. We must ensure that the Paris conference is successful for the sake of the climate. We must make certain that the United Nations can remain faithful to the mandate given to it after a war — a terrible war. We are still facing challenges, but we are certain to meet them if we are united and come together to claim victory.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the French Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. François Hollande, President of the French Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Excellency Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United Mexican States.

Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Peña Nieto (*spoke in Spanish*): As President of Mexico, it is a high honour for me to participate for the first time in the General Assembly, the greatest symbol of unity among nations. Mexico reiterates its historic commitment to this universal forum of dialogue, understanding and cooperation.

Today's world could not be imagined without the United Nations. Its positive influence is present in all realms of our lives. The United Nations leads international efforts to combat hunger, pandemics and climate change. It protects our children, preserves the heritage of humanity and furthers the empowerment and advancement of women around the world. The Organization promotes trade and global communications as well as human rights and peace. Thanks to the United Nations, our world today enjoys greater freedom and is more democratic and more developed.

While United Nations contributions to the well-being of millions of people are indeed evident, one cannot deny the multiple challenges that every country of this planet is currently facing. From the global economy that has yet to recover its dynamism, to regional conflicts that have caused deaths and forced migration flows, to climate change triggering natural disasters, it is clear that the world requires multilateral responses that are more effective.

In a world with so many phenomena that transcend borders, international cooperation is more necessary than ever, and the sum of global efforts can emerge only here, at the United Nations. Today, our planet needs to be able to depend on a more effective, efficient, transparent and representative United Nations, where all societies of the world have greater participation. The United Nations must dare to change in order to improve.

In Mexico, we firmly believe that the United Nations has all the attributes to be more daring and self-renewing. With respect to institutional change, we need a Security Council that evolves and that truly represents the new world equilibrium. It is important to reform the Council in order to strengthen its transparency, accountability and capacity to respond. We believe that the Security Council should be enlarged by increasing the number of non-permanent members, creating long-term seats with the possibility of immediate re-election as part of a more equitable geographic representation. The world needs a United Nations where the permanent members of the Council refrain from using the veto in cases of grave violations of international humanitarian law.

With respect to international peace and security, the United Nations must prevent arms trafficking and the serious damage that phenomenon inflicts on our societies. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) provides the tools to tackle that growing challenge. However, it is vital that all nations sign the Treaty, but, more importantly, that they all ratify it. The First Conference of States Parties to the ATT will be held in Mexico next year. It will be a great opportunity for all nations to work together to prevent arms from hurting children or vulnerable populations around the world.

Similarly, we must also strengthen the United Nations so that it can effectively combat terrorism, which is lacerating societies around the world.

In addition, we need the United Nations to renew its efforts for nuclear disarmament. We must prevent more countries or non-State actors from having that destructive capacity within reach, and we must also demand that those already possessing it reduce and eliminate those weapons. If we want a safer world, no one should use or threaten to use nuclear power to endanger the very survival of humankind itself.

I turn next to the development agenda. Now that the date is approaching to define the sustainable development goals, we need a United Nations with a broader vision of the well-being of individuals. The post-2015 development agenda must recognize that poverty is not determined solely by insufficient income, but also by other scarcities that impede personal and collective development. Furthermore, we believe that economic and social inclusion should be one of the principal points of the agenda.

The United Nations also needs to update its commitment to the rights of girls, boys and adolescents, addressing new challenges that threaten their integrity. We should initiate at the global level a joint initiative to combat harassment at school, or psychological harassment like bullying, and at the same time reinforce basic values among our children and youths. If we want for tomorrow a world in which adults have a spirit of empathy, understanding, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, we need to act now with more determination so that our children and our youth can live free from any type of abuse.

In short, to address the challenges of the twenty-first century, we need a United Nations with a new institutional design, with a renewed commitment to peace and security and, above all, with a comprehensive and inclusive development agenda. Change is never easy, especially when it demands a fundamental transformation and when it depends on the cooperation of multiple actors, each with its own priorities and interests. In the specific case of the United Nations, multiple voices acknowledge the need for a change, but at the same time, they believe it is an impossible task because no one is willing to yield.

In Mexico, we experienced a similar situation. There were those who agreed on the urgency of promoting structural changes domestically, but they also warned that it would not be possible to carry them out. Those voices affirmed that political groups and the Government of the republic would not be able to reach agreement in order to transform our nation. Nonetheless, Mexico demonstrated that it is possible to build with a plurality, that diversity is a strength when there is a readiness for a constructive dialogue. The foundation for achieving that was the Pact for Mexico, an agreement under which all essential commitments were formed in order to advance a broad agenda for reforms in a various spheres of the national life.

Building upon that innovative political instrument, Mexicans dared to improve the quality of education, to make the job market more flexible and to combat monopolies and anti-competitive practices. We dared to modernize the telecommunications sector, to increase the opportunities for credit and reduce its cost, to strengthen public finances and to initiate a new model for energy development for the country. We Mexicans held dialogues and agreed on the renewal of our political and electoral institutions and of our justice system and accountability system. We decided to transform ourselves. Those profound changes were decades overdue, because no political party has held a majority in Congress in past years. Nevertheless, through dialogue and consensus it was possible to achieve those changes in just 20 months.

What was the principal difference from the past? It was the will of an entire nation that dared to change. Mexico acted decisively and wisely. It dared to transform itself and to set itself in motion. On the basis of that experience, I am convinced that the United Nations can also change.

Almost 70 years after its creation, the United Nations must evolve, as the world has evolved. I know it will not be easy to build consensus to succeed, because inertia must be broken and paradigms must be changed. But I also know that the talent, the vision and the audicity needed to achieve that do exist. It is time to build a new United Nations for a new century. That will require that all States have the will to listen, discuss and tolerate and the capacity to yield. At the end of that process, the world will have more a efficient Organization, a United Nations that is able to work successfully in favour of the peace and development of the planet. My country is ready to play an active role in the transformation. It is determined to evolve with the United Nations.

Mexico supports and values peacekeeping operations, a United Nations instrument that assists countries to overcome conflicts and create conditions for sustainable peace by providing the means for reconstruction, humanitarian aid and security. That is why Mexico has decided to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations, providing humanitarian work to benefit civilian populations. Our participation will be in keeping with a clear mandate from the Security Council and with the foreign-policy norms established in our Constitution. With such determination, Mexico, as a responsible stakeholder, will take a historic step in its commitment to the United Nations.

Next year, the Organization will reach its seventieth anniversary. That will offer us a great opportunity to make our plurality both an asset and a strength for change. With the participation of all, with the drive and the boldness of the Member States, the United Nations can transform itself to benefit the whole of humanity.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United Mexican States for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Finland.

Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Niinistö: The events of the past months fill us with sadness. We have entered another grim era of conflicts. What has happened in Ukraine and in Syria and Iraq illustrates that. The core values and rules on which the United Nations is based have been violated. The crisis in Ukraine has a deep impact on the security of Europe. We have not experienced such breakdown since the tragedy of the Balkan wars. But I want to stress that Ukraine is not only a question limited to Europe. It should — and eventually will — concern all of us.

A rule-based international system is a precondition for peace and security, for human rights and development. If we cease to protect this system, it will cease to protect us. It would be a dramatic and far-reaching mistake to let our rule-based order slip towards chaos and the law of the jungle. Unfortunately, the Security Council has not been able to uphold its responsibilities either in Ukraine or in Syria. We need to reform the Security Council. Finland supports the efforts to restrict the use of veto.

I am pleased that the General Assembly adopted resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine", on 27 March, by a clear majority. Yet the voice of this important body should have been even stronger, condemning Russia's actions and charting a way towards ending violence and restoring peace. When the territorial integrity of a Member State is violated and it loses control over a part of its own area through an illegal annexation, the Member State should be able to turn to the United Nations for justice and remedy. De-escalation in Ukraine cannot happen without Russia's active steps. Russia should control its border and prevent the flow of arms and fighters and thereby contribute to stabilization of the situation in eastern Ukraine. Only a political solution can solve this crisis. We have recently seen some steps towards that, but a lot still remains to be done.

As the Secretary-General has reminded us, the international community must not abandon the people of Syria. We cannot forget those who have died or those driven from their homes — half of the population of Syria. Three million Syrians have been received as refugees in the neighbouring countries. The Syrian conflict can be solved only by political means. Finland continues to give its full support to the United Nations Special Envoy for Syria. Women in Syria, as in other conflict-driven countries, must be included in the peace process. We welcome women's active efforts to strengthen their voices in Syria and eslewhere.

The war in Syria has severely affected the security situation in the whole region. The geographic expansion of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant organization, with its horrendous terror, is a by-product of the conflict. That situation has serious consequences locally, regionally and internationally. That challenge must be tackled together through wide-ranging international cooperation. Finland will contribute to those common efforts.

The international community showed determination last autumn after the chemical attacks in Syria. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Mission for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic focused on the verification and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons programme. Finland has worked alongside the Joint Mission in that demanding operation. We must remain vigilant. In order to fulfil its United Nations commitments as well as to comply with the Chemical Weapons Convention, Syria must take further action. We must show that determination again. I strongly reiterate the appeal to the Security Council to refer the Syrian situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC must be used when the national justice system is not able to deliver.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Those conflicts are unfolding at a time when cooperation and common efforts are more needed than ever. We share the same global challenges, such as climate change. Ebola is another serious threat. To help, Finland will double its assistance. It is critically important to us and our planet that we address them together. Here, I want to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his leadership in addressing those challenges.

Intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 agenda will commence soon. We should aspire to a new kind of global commitment to fulfil both the needs of mankind and planet Earth. We owe this to our children and their children. To achieve sustainable development, we need clear objectives. We need to be able to monitor our commitments in an efficient way. All resources and means should be mobilized. We cannot rely only on traditional resources any more. Public funding for development is still important for the poorest and those affected by conflicts. But at the same time, domestic resource mobilization, innovation, trade and technology and investments must play a stronger role in sustainable development.

Many countries of the global South enjoy a robust economic growth. That provides an opportunity to invest in tax systems, which in turn generates public resources for sustainable development. A just tax and redistribution policy is one of the most efficient ways to reduce inequalities and fight marginalization. The rule of law and the fight against corruption play a huge role as well.

I trust the Secretary-General to be both visionary and concrete when setting the scene for the intergovernmental negotiations. This process will culminate next year in this very Hall. The best way to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the

United Nations next year is to adopt transformative commitments that set us on a path towards sustainable development.

I started by describing the grim state of international relations. My analysis is not an excuse for inaction, but a call to redouble our diplomatic efforts. We must act with determination, and we must act now. Finland will support efforts to restore peace and prevent further damage to our rule-based international system. We must also aim high in addressing together the broader global challenges of climate change and sustainable development.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Finland for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Indonesia.

Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Yudhoyono: It is a great honour for me to stand once again before the Assembly — the last time I shall do so in my two terms as President of Indonesia. I could not agree more with the theme chosen for this session, "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda", which is very much in line with the work of the High-level Panel I have been privileged to co-chair.

For the past 15 years, the international community has been working on a grand and ambitious project for humankind, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Our hard work over the years has produced achievements that include breakthroughs in combating poverty, increasing school enrolment and improving public health. Those achievements are encouraging and, in some instances, inspiring. But humankind as a whole has not achieved all the MDG targets. The successes have been uneven, differing between regions, within regions and even within countries. We have come a long way, yet we still have a long way to go.

For those who have made it, as well as for those who have yet to make it, I have learned one great lesson, which is that the most important driver of change lies in governance — not just good governance, but smart governance. Smart governance usually involves innovative leadership and active public participation. Without at least those two elements, all the hard work we put in will not produce the desired results. And with smart governance, nations can exceed their potential and leapfrog over others ahead of them. In Indonesia we have managed to increase our national per capita income by 400 per cent within just one decade, something that was beyond our wildest imagination.

The quest to achieve the MDGs over the past 15 years has also reinforced the need for a more robust global partnership. There has certainly been much activity. But somehow, our efforts in the World Trade Organization, on the post-Kyoto climate, on reforming the global financial architecture and the United Nations and in many other areas have proved painfully slow.

As we set forth a new global agenda for development, I believe we can draw on those years of trial and error to become more acutely aware of the promises and pitfalls of development, and of what we want and what we do not want. We do not want development that measures progress in terms of material possessions alone and ends up dehumanizing and marginalizing our citizens. What we want is sustainable development with equity.

Yet the importance of our work lies beyond the issue of development, since we are now also confronted with yet another major problem. We are witnessing a worrying deterioration in the relations between the major Powers. None of us, certainly not the United Nations, can afford to bury our heads in the sand about that grim development.

It is especially worrying, given that for more than two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world actually witnessed a series of promising events. Most fundamental was the fact that improved relations among the major Powers created ample space for new strategic and economic opportunities. Global trade totals have reached $23 trillion, an almost six-fold expansion since the year after the Cold War ended in 1990. The fastest growth — one and a half times as fast as during the preceding two decades — was from 2000 to 2013, the period that coincided with our work on the MDGs. The value of global investments reached almost $1.5 trillion in 2013 for a near seven-fold increase since 1990.

In South-East Asia, that positive geopolitical development has allowed us to develop stronger cooperation and to develop the region's architecture. It led to the establishment of the East Asia Summit, a vision for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) community, a progressive ASEAN Charter, a more active ASEAN Regional Forum and other institutions. And Indonesia has also been able to develop strategic partnerships with all the major Powers as well as with many emerging Powers.

Today I see that the international community is concerned about the danger of the old Cold War returning. Major-Power relations are worsening, fuelled by mutual suspicion. Relationships that were previously stable and cooperative are now marked by volatility and tension. That benefits no one, and we should therefore not let it become permanent. The major Powers — indeed, all of us — have an obligation to work together to resolve the major issues of our time. To mention only a few, we must end the suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza and the rest of the occupied territory and deliver the still elusive two-State solution. We must resolve the conflict in Ukraine that is now upsetting relations between Russia and the West. And we must find an effective and durable solution to the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

To do all of this, there must be mutual accommodation. There must be a forward-looking attitude that embraces a win-win predisposition rather than a zero-sum attitude. Diplomacy must take precedence. The deficit of trust must be transformed into strategic opportunities and confidence-building. It is not enough just to call for peaceful coexistence. That is so twentieth century. Here in the twenty-first century, we need much more than conditions in which world Powers merely peacefully coexist. We need those Powers to work passionately together in order to foster strategic cooperation and to tackle global issues. They must begin to turn the trust deficit into a new strategic trust not only among themselves but also with emerging Powers and with all nations of the United Nations. Is that possible? I would say a resolute yes, for that is what has transpired in South-East Asia. In the second half of the 1960s, South-East Asian nations were poor, divided and insecure, threatened by a war raging in their neighbourhood and ignorant of one another after centuries of separation during the colonial past.

The establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations enabled countries in the region to form the habit of dialogue and consultation with one another and to learn to trust one another. Today, we can proudly say that the once-divided 10 South-East Asian nations now belong to ASEAN-10. Together, they are all drivers of regional affairs and masters of their own destiny. A number of sensitive inter-State and intra-State conflicts have been peacefully resolved. Those that remain are being addressed through dialogue and negotiation. Economic interdependence has become the norm of the day.

Moreover, South-East Asia is on the verge of becoming a true community. We regard that as the apex of strategic trust, which we believe can be replicated everywhere. The culture of peace and coexistence that we are trying to attain in Indonesia and in the ASEAN region is clearly the antidote to the poison of fundamentalist prejudice and deep intolerance, as practised by a terrorist group in Iraq and Syria that falsely defines itself as the Islamic State. The ideology of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant not only betrays the true teaching of Islam as a religion of peace but also harms and seriously upsets the Islamic Ummah throughout the world.

It has been a great privilege to forge closer bonds between Indonesia and all nations represented in this great assembly, the United Nations. As I look back, I must admit that there remain many challenges that Indonesia must resolve. Some of our efforts are already on the right track. In a world desperately grappling with climate change, we are progressively and boldly applying a moratorium on deforestation — our important contribution to reducing carbon emission. In a world of economic uncertainty, we have increased our national income per capita by 400 per cent within just a short decade.

In a world witnessing rising extremism, Indonesia continues to hold firm to the values of freedom, tolerance, moderation and multiculturalism, which form the basis of our nationhood. In a world still burdened by insurgencies, we have managed to find a permanent peaceful political solution to end the 30-year conflict in Aceh province. In a world marked by turbulent transitions in the Middle East, time and again we have shown to our people and to the world that, in Indonesia, democracy, Islam, modernity and human rights go together.

In a world often stigmatized by the past, Indonesia has opened a entire new chapter of peaceful relations with Timor-Leste on the basis on equality and mutual respect. In a world where territorial disputes often erupt into open conflicts, Indonesia has continued to peacefully resolve, one by one, the overlapping maritime borders with Vietnam, the Philippines, Singapore and other nations.

The Indonesian and South-East Asian experiences underscore the dawn of a new age of globalism for the twenty-first century — a world that openly embraces change as opposed to being intimidated by it. What the world so desperately needs today is a pioneering spirit: the boldness to break old boundaries and to create new frontiers. Given that spirit, I believe that humankind can overcome the challenge of climate change, conquer poverty, eradicate social injustice, hasten the global economic recovery and create a culture of peace among all religions, including the Abrahamic faiths. In that spirit, we can, hopefully, end the cycle of violence, hatred, fear and humiliation that has made so many conflicts around the world seem intractable for decades and centuries.

In saying that, I am neither a Utopian nor a blind idealist in understanding international relations. However, I believe that, with a strong commitment and political will, we can make the impossible possible. As we say in Indonesia, where there is a will, there is a way. We must drive the frontiers of nationalism into a new globalism, where we can devise solutions to national, regional and global issues at the same time. We must achieve a new globalism, where no nation is left behind and no nation dominates and where rights are protected and responsibilities are met. In the world of a new globalism, wars are unthinkable. In the first place, wars are fought because nations play a zero-sum game, where the winners take all and the losers weep — the game of us against them, which the "us" must win and the "them" must lose. Winners today are losers tomorrow.

Let me conclude by saying that now is the time for all of us to start the serious business of building a new world of peace, prosperity and justice and of making everybody a winner by creating and nurturing the new all-inclusive "we" that leaves no one behind.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Indonesia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Ms. Cristina Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Argentine Republic.

Ms. Cristina Fernández, President of Argentine Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Cristina Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Fernández (*spoke in Spanish*): I address the General Assembly at a very special moment, not only for the world but also for my country. I would like to begin by reflecting on the words with which Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon opened this sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. He went over many of the problems, tragedies and calamities that are unsettling the world today, and I think, if I remember correctly, that he literally confirmed that the turmoil, as he defined it, that is upsetting the world today is endangering multilateralism.

I sincerely believe that most of the problems that the planet has today economically and financially, with respect to terrorism and security, in terms of force and territorial integrity, of war and peace, are the result of the exact opposite: the absence of an effective, practical and democratic multilateralism. That is why, I would like to begin today in particular by thanking and congratulating the General Assembly for adopting resolution 68/304, on 9 September, by which it finally decided by a wide majority of 124 votes to dedicate itself to drafting a multilateral convention which will be a regulatory legal framework for restructuring the sovereign debts of all countries, a task that we needed to take on.

I have been coming to the General Assembly since 2003, first as a Senator, and then, starting in 2007, as President. We always came calling for reform of the Security Council and of the International Monetary Fund. Our point of departure was the experience we had in my country, the Argentine Republic. Today, I would go so far as to say in this international context that my country, the Argentine Republic, is a triple leading case in terms of economics and finance, terrorism and security, and force and territorial integrity.

The first area is the economic and financial crisis that spread throughout the world starting in 2008, which persists to this day and which is beginning to threaten emerging economies whose greater economic growth we have supported over the past decade. The 2008 crisis was experienced by my country in 2001, when the largest default on sovereign debt in living memory occurred. At the time, the Argentine Republic had accrued debt representing 160 per cent of the gross domestic product, with the consent of multilateral organizations, because when one is speaking about that level of debt, the problem is not just that of the debtor, but also of the creditors.

Starting with the dictatorship on 24 March 1976, and through the neoliberal period, Argentina was a favourite of the International Monetary Fund. In the end, Argentina accumulated an unprecedented debt that caused the country to implode, not just in economic terms but also in political terms. We had five presidents in a single week. At that point, nobody claimed responsibility for what had taken place in Argentina. Argentina had to resolve its problems as best it could, and in 2003, a few months after taking office, a President who had come to head the Government with only 22 per cent of the vote came to speak at the General Assembly (see A/58/PV.11) and maintained that it was necessary to generate a model of development and growth for the country so that the country could shoulder its debt. He maintained, in a rather interesting metaphor, that dead people do not pay their debts and that countries have to live, develop and grow in order to meet their obligations.

But he also said that the level of debt — 160 per cent of the gross domestic product — was not our country's responsibility alone; that we as a country were accepting responsibility for having adopted policies that had been forced upon us; that while we were shouldering our responsibility, we were also requesting and calling for the multilateral organizations like the International Monetary Fund and the creditors themselves, which had lent money at usurious rates — at that time as high as 14 per cent in United States dollars — which were receiving payments in the Argentine Republic, to also assume part of the responsibility for that indebtedness.

And with that man — who took over with 22 per cent of the vote, with 25 per cent unemployment, a 54 per cent poverty rate and 27 per cent of extreme poverty, without education, without health, without social security, over time, with a model of development and growth — we were able not only to create millions of jobs, millions of people becoming integrated in the social security system, including retirees and pensioners, but also to invest 6 per cent of the gross domestic product in education, and set aside enormous amounts of money for the country's infrastructure, building roads, schools, nuclear plants, hydroelectric plants, water, gas and electricity plants that now cover the entire country, in an unprecedented programme of social inclusion that has allowed to reduce poverty and extreme poverty to single digits.

Today, the International Monetary Fund itself recognizes that Argentina's economic growth between 2004 and 2011 is the third-largest globally in terms of quality of growth. Only Bulgaria and China are ahead of us. In Latin America, we have the greatest quality of growth and the best purchasing power for our workers and salaried employees and the highest social security deposits.

We have been able to achieve all of that while also dealing with debt that others had generated. It is worth repeating that our Governments were not the ones that declared a default, nor were they the ones that had assumed the debt; we were simply the ones who shouldered the debt, as appropriate, and paid, from 2003 to today, more than $190 billion — I repeat, more than $190 billion — by restructuring the defaulted debt with 92.4 per cent of creditors through two debt swaps, one carried out by President Kirchner in 2005 and the other carried out by me in 2010.

What is certain is that we were successful. We succeeded because 92.4 per cent of Argentina's creditors regularized their situation. We began to make regular payments, and not only to them. We also fully paid our debt to the International Monetary Fund through so-called stand-by arrangements. We were able to completely cancel our debt with the International Monetary Fund. A few months ago, we also concluded negotiations with the Paris Club on a debt dating back to 1956. It was so long ago that I was three years old when that debt was created and the Minister of the Economy of my country, who discussed the restructuring and renegotiation of the debt with the Paris Club, was not even born. Yet we reached an agreement with 19 European Union finance ministers to finally restructure the debt. We are now paying the first phase of $642 million.

This does not end there. We also regularized the situation with the rulings of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes at the World Bank, which has begun hearings not for acts or actions committed by our Government, but for the actions of previous Governments that ended up in the World Bank tribunal. We have also resolved that issue, just as we arrived at an arrangement with Repsol when we decided to regain control of our energy resources and expropriated 51 per cent of the oil company's shares. We also restructured that debt and reached an agreement.

We have done all this with our own resources, without access to capital markets because Argentina, due to the default of 2001, was denied access to capital markets. This represents a process of unprecedented social inclusion. Why do I say "unprecedented"? During the 1950s there were similar inclusion processes in my country, but the difference is that we initiated this process of inclusion after complete and utter bankruptcy. At the peak of default, we were able to overcome default, to include the people of Argentina and to enjoy social growth with inclusion. And today Argentina is extricating itself, and in addition we have one of the lowest debt ratios in the world.

The other leading case to which I referred and now wish to discuss is the emergence of the so-called vulture funds. That is not a term used by any popular South American leader or by any African ruler, although African countries have also been major victims of these vulture funds. One of the first global leaders to mention them was the former English Prime Minister Gordon Brown at the General Assembly in 2002. This expression became the copyrighted shorthand for something unworthy and immoral that kept countries from addressing the genuine problems of education, health and poverty. Today, with the support of the judicial system of this country, Argentina is now being assaulted by these vulture funds.

What are these vulture funds? They represent the 1 per cent of debt-holders that did not take part in the 2005 restructuring. They could not participate because they had purchased bonds in 2008. As everyone knows, these are specialized funds, as indicated by their names, that purchased funds or shares of countries that had defaulted on their debt or were about to do so. Subsequently, they did not revert to the country in question for the payment of that debt, but brought suits in various jurisdictions in order to make exorbitant profits. "Profits" is hardly the right word, because what has been recognized in a judgment passed down here in the jurisdiction of New York is that this 1 per cent grew at a rate of 1,608 per cent in a five-year period. Is there any business, undertaking or investor earning 1,600 per cent in just five years? That is why they are called vulture funds. Today, they are obstructing the recovery of that 92.4 per cent who trusted in Argentina.

I am therefore pleased that the Assembly has taken the bull by the horns, and I hope that between this year and next — before the General Assembly holds its new session in 2015 — we will have arrived at a regulatory framework to restructure sovereign debts. The point is to engage in an exercise in active and constructive multilateralism so that no other country will have to experience what Argentina — a country that has the ability and willingness to pay its debts despite the harassment of these vulture funds — has been through.

These vulture funds also threaten and hold the economy of our country hostage by provoking rumours, slander and libel from the personal to the economic and financial, so that they sometimes act as a destabilizing factor in the economy. Those who set bombs are not the only terrorists; those who destabilize the economy of a country and create poverty, misery and hunger through the sin of speculation are economic terrorists. That is what we want to spell out. That is why we strongly advocate the establishment of a multilateral convention soon and expeditiously, not just for Argentina, but for the rest of the world. We believe that a financial and economic balance that addresses the social and economic disparities among countries and within societies will also be a great antidote to those who recruit young people who have no hope in the future and enrol them in crazy crusades. We must all lament that. We can see only the surface of the phenomenon; we also have to delve deeply into the causes that mobilize people.

We also talked about my country as a triple leading case on terrorism and security. My country is the only country of the Americas other than the United States of

America that was the target of terrorist attacks: one in 1992 when the embassy of Israel was blown up, and the second in 1994 when the headquarters of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) was bombed. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the bombing of AMIA. I dare say before this Assembly — in the presence of some of the family members of the victims who have always been with us — that the Government headed by President Kirchner did the utmost and went the greatest lengths to uncover the real culprits, not only because it opened all my country's intelligence files and created a special prosecutor investigation unit, but also because, when in 2006 the justice system of my country accused Iranian citizens of involvement in the bombing of AMIA, I myself was the only President who dared to propose asking the Islamic Republic of Iran to cooperate with and assist in the investigation. That request was made intermittently from 2007 to 2011, until the Islamic Republic of Iran finally agreed to a bilateral meeting, allowing it to be included in the agenda. That meeting led to the signing by both countries of a memorandum of understanding on legal cooperation that allowed for the Iranian citizens who had been accused, and who live in Tehran, to be deposed before the judge.

But what happened when we signed that memorandum? It seemed as if all hell had broken out, both nationally and internationally. The Jewish associations that had sought our support for so many years and that had come here with us to ask for help turned against us, and when an agreement was finally reached on legal cooperation they accused us of complicity with the State of Iran.

The same thing happened here in the United States. When the vulture funds lobbied before the United States Congress, they accused us of collaborating with the Islamic Republic of Iran, which at the time was known as the Terrorist State of Iran. They even lobbied on their websites, posting pictures of me on the Internet with former President Ahmadinejad as if we were business partners. Just this week, we learned that the iconic Waldorf Astoria hotel, in this city, was the setting for a meeting between the Secretary of State of this country and his Iranian counterpart.

We are not criticizing them. Quite the contrary, anything that represents dialogue and understanding seems very good to us. But we wish to ask those who have been accusing Iran of being a terrorist State — and I am not speaking here of the last century, but of last year — what they would say today about the members of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), many of whom not so long ago were called freedom fighters when they were fighting in Syria against the Government of Bashar Al-Assad. And this is where I believe we have another problem with respect to security and terrorism. The major Powers too often and too easily seesaw from the concept of friend to enemy, and terrorist to non-terrorist. We need to agree once and for all not to use international politics or geopolitical positions to determine positions of power. I say that as a militant opponent of international terrorism.

By the way, just to add a touch of color, ISIS has apparently issued a threat against me that is under legal investigation in my country. The threat apparently has two justifications: first, because of my close relationship with His Holiness Pope Francis, and secondly, because I recognize the need for two States, Israel and Palestine. While I am at it, let me reiterate my call on the Assembly to recognize Palestine once and for all as a State with full membership in this body. We have to begin to undo some of the Gordian knots — because there is not just one Gordian knot but several — regarding the situation in the Middle East, which involves recognizing the State of Palestine, Israel's right to live securely within its borders, and Palestine's right not to be subjected to the kind of disproportionate use of force that led to the deaths of hundreds of women and children, which we condemn just as we also condemn those who attack Israel with missiles.

In a time of economic vultures and hawks of war, we need more doves of peace to build a safer world. We need more respect for international law and more equal treatment of those seated in this Hall. Just this morning, I overheard one leader refer to the use of force to attack the territorial integrity of a country.

Here too, the Republic of Argentina is a leading case. For more than 100 years, we have had a claim against the United Kingdom on a matter of sovereignty. We once again ask the Assembly to call on the United Kingdom to sit down with Argentina to discuss the matter of the sovereignty of the Malvinas. No one cares and there is not a single veto from the Security Council, because Argentina is not a member of the Security Council and is not even among the countries that decide what happens in the world. So long as that continues, and so long as the votes of the five permanent members of the Security Council are worth more than the votes of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Egypt, Uganda, Argentina, Bahrain or the United Arab Emirates, nothing will be resolved. We will just have the same speeches we hear every year without arriving at a resolution.

The Assembly must fight to take back the powers it delegated to the Council, since —almost paradoxically — the Assembly has to ask the Council for permission on its decisions or on whether to admit a member. We need to reassert that the Assembly is a sovereign body of the United Nations, and that each of us is worth one vote in a true global democracy. Not everything will be resolved when that global democracy is respected to the letter, but I do believe it will mark the beginning of a solution. I am neither a pessimist nor an optimist; I consider myself to be a realist. In any event, the child of pessimism and optimism is always optimism, but with realism. Optimism without realism is either ingenuity or cynicism. I do not wish to appear ingenuous or cynical before this audience.

I want to convey what we really think in my country. We have long demanded reform of the Security Council and of the International Monetary Fund. In 2003, reform the International Monetary Fund seemed almost inevitable; today, hardly anyone remembers the idea of reforming the International Monetary Fund, because it no longer plays a central role in decisions. Even the International Monetary Fund itself and both its current head and former leaders, including Anne Krueger, are also calling for reforms with respect to the restructuring of sovereign debts. So long as there is no international treaty approved by this Assembly, no matter how many clauses are imposed by the restructuring, there will always be a Judge Griesa somewhere in the world who says that they are meaningless, and who will end up applying usurious taxes to bleed some poor country to death. That is what is happening, because it seems to me that they are trying to overturn the restructuring of sovereign debt for which the Argentine people worked so hard.

Before coming here I was in Rome, meeting with a fellow countryman who today occupies a strong, exemplary religious and moral leadership. I would like to offer a message of peace and of peacebuilding. If we truly wish to fight terrorism, then let us work for peace. We cannot fight the terrorists by beating the drums of war. Quite the contrary, that is exactly what they want — a symmetrical reaction so that the wheel again begins to turn and a price is paid in blood.

That is why I think it is important for us to think deeply about those issues. Above all, I want to bring to the table the certainty that if the United Nations recovers its leadership, if the Assembly resumes its mandate, when too many countries fail to comply with international law, even though they require others to do so, then I am certain that we will have made a major contribution to peacebuilding and the fight against terrorism from which no one would have been left out. But we have to leave to our children a much better world than the one we have today.

Finally, I wish to recall that a year ago the problems were different. A year ago, we were discussing other problems, other threats to security. Times have changed. The wrongdoers of yesterday do not seem so bad today. Those who should have been invaded and crushed a year ago, today seem to be cooperating to fight the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). First, it was Al-Qaida, and, I wonder, where did Al-Qaida and the Taliban spring from? Where do they get their weapons and resources? My country does not produce weapons. Who sells arms to those groups? Then there was the Arab Spring, which ended up by being not so much a spring as a fall and even a winter. Those involved went from being freedom-fighters to being persecuted or imprisoned. Now there is ISIS, a new terrorist organization that carries out beheadings on television on a carefully set stage. What is causing all this, I wonder? Where is this coming from? I have become really distrustful of everything after seeing what is happening in the world today — real-life scenes that make fictional series look trivial.

It is therefore worth asking ourselves why it is that we are facing ever-greater problems — problems that caused the Pope to comment that there is practically a third world war. That is true. It is a world war but not along the lines of the more conventional wars of the twentieth century. There are hotspots where the only victims are civilian populations. That is why, a few minutes from now in the Security Council, of which Argentina is a non-permanent member, we wish to raise some of those issues. We have no certainties, no absolute truths, but we have many questions. We want to put them to those who possess a lot more information than we do, far more data and far more extensive networks of information than my country has. Heaven forbid that, with all those data, they have a wealth of information but can understand little of what is happening. For they have to be able to comprehend what is happening if they are to come up with a definitive solution.

I deeply appreciate once again the political will of the 124 countries that supported resolution 68/304. As everyone knows, there was pressure to keep us from getting that number of supporters or having a vote, but I think that the exercise of practical, effective and democratic multilateralism that the adoption of the resolution represents demonstrates that all is not lost. On the contrary, it is in the hands of each and every one of us, each of our countries, to find real and effective solutions to the problems the world has today.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Argentine Republic for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Cristina Fernández, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The President returned to the Chair.

Address by Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Turkey.

Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Erdoğan (*spoke in Turkish; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): I greet the Assembly respectfully, and I hope that its sixty-ninth session will provide favourable results for all countries, peoples and humankind. I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the President of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session and to thank Mr. John William Ashe for his work as President at the sixty-eighth session.

The sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly is being held on the hundredth anniversary of the First World War, which broke out in 1914. We sadly see that lands affected by the First World War are still deprived of stability, peace and prosperity even after a century. A wide area — ranging from Iraq to Syria, from Palestine to Yemen, from Libya to Afghanistan and to Ukraine — is witnessing scenes that leave deep scars on the conscience of humankind. People still die from hunger and communicable diseases in the twenty-first century. Children and women are brutally murdered in wars. The poor countries struggle with hunger, malnutrition, communicable diseases and lack of education, while the rich countries of the world enjoy prosperity. Climate change poses a major threat to the future of our world and that of our children. That situation, which is a stain on human dignity, directly concerns all of humankind and therefore, of course, the United Nations.

Let me again, at this sixty-ninth session, stress that no one is innocent in a world in which children are killed, no one is safe, and no one can enjoy peace and prosperity. In the past year alone, 6.3 million children under five years of age lost their lives worldwide. As a result of the war in Syria, 17,000 children have died, 375,000 have been injured, and 19,000 have lost at least one body part.

This year 490 children were killed and 3,000 were injured as direct targets of the most modern and murderous weapons used against the Gaza Strip in Palestine. As they played on a beach, ran around in a park, took refuge in a mosque or school, or were comforted in their mothers' laps, they were mercilessly killed in front of cameras and before the eyes of the world. We also see that those attempting to draw the world's attention to the deaths of women, children and the disabled in Palestine are being variously labelled by others. Those objecting to the murders in Iraq and Syria and the murder of democracy in Egypt are again being subjected to certain unfair and groundless accusations and almost immediately accused of supporting terrorism.

The global conscience is aware that those who are ruthlessly criticizing some countries for lack of freedom of the press are ignoring the 16 journalists killed in Palestine and the pressure put on members of the media. I will speak very clearly. Those who stand by and remain unresponsive to the killing of children, the vicious murder of women and the overthrow with weapons and tanks of Governments that have come to power through the will of the people are openly participating in those crimes against humanity.

Even more significant, the modern world's double standard leads to substantial and serious distrust among many people. That feeling of distrust affects the United Nations — where we are today — and other international organizations and threatens the sense of justice, while filling millions of people with despair. That distrust plays a principal role in fuelling the growth of international terrorism today. The double standard with regard to the oppressed and the indifference to the killing of children help to foment terrorism around the world. Those who lose hope in the United Nations and other international organizations are desperate and are helpless to resist the clutches of terrorists.

The problems in Iraq have wrought havoc among the Iraqi people. More recently, the difficulties have spread beyond Iraq's borders. Unfortunately, Iraq has now become a haven for terrorist organizations. The current crisis in Iraq directly affects the countries in the region, particularly Turkey. Given the newly established Government in Iraq, it is our hope that Iraq will make a fresh start. Turkey will stand by the Iraqi people in their search for peace and stability. Likewise, the Syrian crisis is spilling over the borders of that country. The unresolved issue of half a century — Palestine — is already a root cause of many problems in the region.

Implementing a two-State solution, lifting the blockade against Gaza and establishing an independent, viable State of Palestine alongside Israel is a political, human and moral necessity. Many have spoken about a two-State solution from this rostrum. However, speaking about it is not sufficient. It is high time to act. It is no longer appropriate simply to talk about the issue — we must advance beyond that. Thousands of people are dying while we talk instead of acting. I think, at this point, it is a sad indication of the limits of our sense of responsibility here at the United Nations. We must therefore move forward. We must address these problems at the United Nations without any further delay in order to prevent more deaths of innocent people and arrive at a solution.

Let me also say that the world is larger than the five permanent members of the Security Council. The fact that they have rendered the United Nations ineffective, despite the situation in the world, must not be accepted by the global conscience. Otherwise, decisions taken at the United Nations will depend on a single country. That is, if one country disagrees, then a decision will not be taken or implemented. The United Nations failed to find a solution as more than 2,000 innocent people were killed within only two months in Palestine. In Syria, the United Nations failed to find effective solutions as more than 200,000 people were killed and more than 9 million people were displaced in the past four years.

I find it strange that we focus on issues selectively. If 2,000 people are killed by chemical weapons, then we focus on chemical weapons, and we consider the killing of 2,000 people by chemical weapons to be a crime. But what about the killing of 200,000 people by conventional weapons — is that not a crime? I cannot understand such an approach or such a mentality. Let us clarify our thinking. Let it be understood that the use of any kind of weapon leading to the deaths of people is a crime, whether by chemical or conventional means.

The elected President in Egypt was overthrown by a coup. Thousands of people wanted to defend their electoral choice and were killed. Yet, the United Nations and democratic countries have done nothing but stand by while those events unfolded and the person who conducted the coup was legitimized. If we wish to speak meaningfully of democracy, then we should respect the choice of the people at the ballot box. If, on the other hand, we intend to defend people who come to power via a coup, then I must call into question the whole existence of the United Nations.

The United Nations is also unable to take an effective stance in the face of uncontrolled events, such as terrorism and migration in Iraq. This silence, desperation and unresponsiveness can no longer continue. We need more efficient and speedy decision-making mechanisms if we are to be able to address global and regional problems. Furthermore, the United Nations should act more courageously in standing up for the right side of the issues.

Let me point out another problem. We do not approve of any kind of terrorism that is supposedly carried out in the name of religion, and we believe that such acts are hugely disrespectful to all religions. We strongly condemn tying Islam, which means peace, to terrorism. It is highly offensive that Islam and terror are spoken of together. Similarly, those who call their inhuman acts Islamic are offending the religion of Islam, every other religion, and humankind generally.

Turkey has been trying very hard to build peace and prosperity in the region. We do not interfere in the internal affairs of any country; we respect and support the territorial integrity of every country in the region. Regarding the question of Palestine and Israel, we have been working to try to achieve a two-State solution based on peace and mutual respect. Our sensitivity to this issue is based on the principle that the right to live of every human being is sacred.

We have approached the problems in our region on humanitarian and moral grounds alone, heedless of race, religion, sect or interests. Our country is sheltering 1.5 million people who have had to leave Syria, and mostly from our own resources. Let me repeat, 1.5 million refugees are in my country. As the host country, we are providing them with food, medicine and education. As for support from the rest of the world, there has not been much, unfortunately. So far we have spent more than $3.5 billion on the Syrian refugees in our country. Of the roughly 4 million Syrian refugees in the world, 1.5 million are in Turkey, with the rest in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and other countries. By contrast, I would like to ask what the strong and rich countries of Europe are doing. So far they have sheltered only 130,000 Syrian refugees — 130,00 in all of Europe, while in Turkey alone we have 1.5 million, plus the 2.5 million in the other countries I just mentioned.

The crisis in Syria has become a regional and global issue, so much so that it is impossible to remain indifferent to it, whether for political or humanitarian reasons. On top of this, we have treated 102 injured civilians from Gaza in our hospitals. Turkey has also taken in 30,000 Yazidis fleeing Iraq, and, just before I came to New York, we opened our borders to Kurds fleeing Syria. It was Turkey who gave them humanitarian aid. In the past five days alone, the number of Syrian refugees entering our country exceeded 150,000.

Five hundred years ago, we opened our doors to Jews who had been expelled from Europe. We have always protected the rights of Christians in Europe, and today we are still opening our arms to those in need, regardless of their religion, race or sect. I am proud to say that Turkey allocates 2.1 per cent of its national income to humanitarian aid, and as such has become one of the most generous countries in the world. In addition, thanks to the experience we have gained throughout history, we have always maintained our objectivity regarding terrorism, sectarian conflicts and other crises, and we have always based our approach on the defence and protection of people's rights.

I would like to point out here that Turkey is not a country that supports or condones terrorism. We have fought terrorism, because we suffered from it for 30 years, and are still suffering from it. Turkey is also strongly against every kind of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and racism. I have said myself that anti-Semitism is a crime against humanity, and I may be one of the few political leaders who has so clearly expressed this to the world. Similarly, the whole world should accept that Islamophobia is also a crime against humanity.

Turkey would like to see a solution to the problem in Cyprus. We would like to see an end to the occupation of territories in Azerbaijan. We have always voiced our strong support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine. We stand ready to support regional and global peace at all costs, and we will continue to be a unique friend to our friends. We will always stand firm against terrorists, oppressors and killers, especially the killers of children. We will fight for democracy and prosperity with all our heart and soul. We are always ready to join forces with other countries within the framework of those ideals and on this common path, and that, of course, is the kind of cooperation that humankind is seeking today.

In that context, I should also say that we look to the General Assembly to support Turkey in its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, and we thank the countries that are backing us. To that end, I hope that the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly will begin the work of wiping away the tears, blood, poverty and injustice staining the face of the Earth. I wish the Assembly and its President, Mr. Kutesa, every success, and I would like to convey my country's sincerest greetings to all the nations represented here.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Turkey for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.

United Nations A/69/PV.7

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

7th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 24 September 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa .... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Address by Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

The President: The Assembly will hear an address by the Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinatinal State of Bolivia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Morales Ayma (*spoke in Spanish*): Mother Earth and humanity are suffering, stricken by the environmental, climate, financial and food crises generated by an inhumane, predatory capitalism that turns human life and Mother Earth into merchandise. Today we have an historic opportunity to build a new, different world, and we must do so without delay. The post-2015 agenda must express that mandate that Mother Earth and humanity demand of us.

We welcome the proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals that incorporates the proposals of Bolivia and the peoples of the world to respect Mother Earth and the concept of harmony with nature. That is not a matter of a simple political statement. It is a commitment shared with the entire world to change our visions of development to a more comprehensive, holistic vision. What we propose to the world is living well, in harmony with Mother Earth, and the construction of a culture of life, complementarity, solidarity and peace.

Respect for Mother Earth has been lost. Today she is being marketed and manipulated, causing grave danger to life. Now as at no other time, the premise that man believes himself to be the lord and master of nature is more true than ever. Humankind, encouraged by capitalism, has turned everything into a market, including genetic manipulation and the destruction of human beings.

Human and natural life and their happiness should be the reason why any vision, tool or focus for development exists. No vision of development makes sense if it does not respect or strengthen life. Economic growth does not in itself lead to the realization of social rights and good living. The horizon of equality calls for the distribution of wealth and the economic and political empowerment of the poor, the excluded and the marginalized. It calls for strengthening communities and building societies with solidarity, not exclusive societies based on the accumulation of wealth and governed by money, covetousness and the avarice of the market.

Together with the Group of 77 and China, I must state the fundamental importance of recovering the sovereignty of our countries and peoples over our natural resources. It is only by recovering control of our natural resources that we will be able to garner greater benefits

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for our peoples, in particular to eliminate poverty and to invest in economic diversification, industrialization and social programmes.

Each country has the right to decide on its priorities and strategies for development, but it is important that those strategies strengthen the environmental functions and the ecosystems of Mother Earth in the framework of complementarity and mutual support between productive systems, communities and nature. It is vital to strike a balance between the rights of Mother Earth, the right to development, the rights of indigenous peoples and social, economic and cultural rights, as well as the right of the poor to emerge from poverty. Complementarity and mutual support, not commercial incentives, are instruments to preserve Mother Earth. On this point we differ from the followers of the so-called green economy.

An important issue to be promoted in the framework of the post-2015 agenda is the human right to water and the right of Mother Earth to enjoy water for regenerating and reproducing life. Three billion people today live in areas or regions where the demand for water exceeds its availability, and that reality will worsen as years pass. By 2030 the demand for water will have increased by 30 per cent. In 2050, four billion people will suffer from critical scarcity of water in the context of climate change.

In Bolivia, in accordance with human right to water and with our Constitution, and thanks to the national programme known as My Water, we have already reached the Millennium Goals. We did so three years ahead of schedule. Declaring the human right to water means it cannot be privatized. Water is life, and it cannot be an object of profit or commercialization. Likewise, to resolve serious social inequalities, basic services such as water, electricity, telecommunications and basic sanitation, as well as education and health, must be a human right.

We have a pending agenda to eradicate poverty and hunger, but for that we must also fight the pitiless, inhumane forces of capital and the market, the omnipresent power of banks and usurers who profit from consumerism and hunger. The so-called vulture funds are an expression of that. They are agents of financial rapine who live off speculation, stealing from developing countries with impunity, taking the bread from the poor, extorting and defrauding with the help of the legal systems of capitalism. They caused the financial crisis and profited from it.

We must profoundly change the exclusionary structures of financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. That should be part of the transformation of the world financial architecture. Those organizations cannot be governed only by developed countries, which, through clever financial strategies, blackmail and oppress developing countries, especially the poorest. That is what we call eradicating financial colonialism.

In the world there still exists an offensive, abusive reality — the 1.3 billion poor people and more than 800 million who are chronically malnourished — as well as the gaps between the rich and the poor. That is due to an unequal distribution of income, but also to an unequal and discriminatory access to wealth, to the means and factors to live well and to enjoy basic services. The increase in the number of hungry people in the world is due, without doubt, to the financial crisis. If not for that, there would now be 413 million fewer hungry people in the world. But the eradication of hunger and poverty is unthinkable without changing the international financial architecture.

The violence of war feeds the darkest interests, such as the geopolitical control of the great Powers and corporations that promote conflicts in order to ensure their imperial or neocolonial interests. Today, it is the economic interests of capital that promote neocolonial wars. With the expense required for war campaigns, humankind could overcome many of its problems, including the Ebola virus, tuberculosis, AIDS or dengue.

We have again witnessed the cruelty and barbarity of the genocidal actions of the Government of Israel against the Palestinian civilian population. We have therefore denounced Israel for violating international humanitarian law and universal human rights. We demand an investigation of the crimes committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip. The Plurinational State of Bolivia, like other Latin American countries, agrees on the profound need to reiterate the legitimacy of United Nations resolutions demanding the end of the occupation of the Palestinian territories and the construction of an independent State within the borders existing prior to 4 June 1967. That is why we again reiterate the need to recognize Palestine as a full-fledged Member of the United Nations.

As Chair of the Group of 77 and China, I cannot fail to mention the important commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the Group of 77, held on 14 and 15 June in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. The Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China adopted a declaration entitled "For a new world order for living well" (see A/68/948), which confirms the principles of unity, complementarity and solidarity and the building of a new world order that establishes a more just and democratic system for the benefit of our peoples.

We commend the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP) on completing 10 years of tireless work towards the integration of peoples. That work goes beyond commercial profit and focuses on promoting the values of cooperation, solidarity and complementarity. In its 10 years, ALBA-TCP has become a major player in Latin America and the world.

Since March 2011, 150,000 people have died in Syria and 3 million people have fled as refugees to neighbouring countries. Bolivia agrees that the future and destiny of Syria must be determined by the Syrian people themselves in the full exercise of democracy, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Bolivia condemns and rejects the interference by the United States of America in Iraq that triggered the current crisis in the country. The war unleashed in 2003 against Iraq destabilized the entire region. It was said that Iraq possessed large quantities of weapons of mass destruction. That argument remains one of the biggest lies ever told in the history of imperialism. On the basis of that lie, peaceful coexistence among social, ethnic and religious groups has been destroyed. The situation has given rise to a terrorist group called the Islamic State that is imposing a new war that threatens the entire region. Bolivia rejects the extreme violence with which that terrorist group has acted against civil society and wholeheartedly affirms that nothing justifies fratricidal violence.

The invasion of Iraq, together with other historical events, has taught us a lesson that wherever the United States of America intervenes, it leaves destruction, hatred, misery and death in its wake, but it also leaves wealth in the hands of those who profit from the wars: the transnational corporations of the arms industry and the oil industry. We must make use of the culture of peace to eradicate extremist fanaticism, but also the imperial warmongering promoted by the United States, which, faced with war, threatens more war. The United Nations was created to build and promote peace, not to justify wars and invasions.

Using war against war is not the same as peace. That is a perverse formula — the formula for death and endless confrontation. We must resolve the structural causes of war: marginalization, poverty, lack of opportunities, cultural and political exclusion, social discrimination, inequality, usurpation and territorial dispossession, ruthless capitalism and dictatorship of the interests of transnational corporations. Every year here we hear Mr. Obama deliver a discourse on war, arrogance and threats against the peoples of the world. It is also a discourse of extremist fanaticism.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States against Cuba is the main tool of United States policy in its eagerness to destroy the revolution and restore its hegemony over Cuban territory. The blockade against Cuba is the most unjust, severe and prolonged system of unilateral sanctions that has ever been applied against any country. The blockade qualifies an act of genocide. That colonial blockade must be ended immediately.

We want to affirm before this Assembly the historic right of the Bolivian people to their access to the sea — a right that was trampled by a brutal invasion promoted by colonial business interests. The colonial imposition, the absence of genuine participatory democracy and the interests of foreign companies were interposed between the Bolivian and Chilean peoples, fraternal peoples who were led to a war favouring the transnationals. Because my country firmly believes in and promotes peace and harmony in our relations with all of our neighbours, we turned to the International Court of Justice in search of dialogue to resolve, peacefully and in good faith, a prolonged dispute over our sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean.

Our demand does not seek to alter the international order of the limits and boundaries or to threaten international treaties, as the the Government of Chile would have people believe. On the contrary, Bolivia has invoked international law and its principles to resolve, methodically and in good faith, the issue of its sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean. An effective and peaceful solution regarding Bolivia's sovereign access to the sea would be in the interests of our peoples, the new generations, the region and the whole world. I therefore call on all countries of the United Nations system at this sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly to join us, not only Bolivia, but our neighbour Chile, in this challenge to peace, justice and rule of law.

We must eradicate violence and war and denounce the imperialist warmongering of the world Powers that arrogantly believe they embody the ideals of freedom. The imperial Powers use their communication media to manipulate the wills and the emotions of the people. They lie and deceive with impunity. They divide and pit nations and communities against one another to promote wars, control strategic resources and put them at the service of their foreign capitals.

This is the century of peace, but peace with sovereignty, with freedom for peoples and not with a free market. This is the century of agreements on liberty, life and peace and not for agreements on free trade in life. There will be no harmony if the arrogance of empires and their renewed colonialism harass, oppress and kill human beings, cultures and the peoples of the world. The empire of finance, the empire of markets, the empire of the arms industry must all fall to give way to the wisdom of life and life in peace and harmony.

To summarize with the greatest respect and admiration for the Assembly, I would like to say that if we want to put an end to poverty, if we want to defend life and Mother Earth, our only path is to put an end to the capitalist system and imperious thinking for the well-being of humanity.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Medina Sánchez (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to participate in the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations by representing the people and the Government of the Dominican Republic. I wish to express my sincere congratulations to Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election as President at the current session. I wish to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for the honour bestowed on our country by inviting us to participate in the Education First initiative. As I hope that he was able to note in his recent visit to our country, the priority that education is being given in the Dominican Republic is perhaps the best indicator of the new hopes springing up in our country. It is true that news of hope is especially valuable these days when it is not very abundant.

Generally speaking, the times we live in raise major challenges for the mission of the Organization — preserving peace, encouraging development, making education and health the entitlement of all inhabitants of the Earth. As we are all aware, about six years ago, a crisis that began in the financial sector of developed countries quickly spread to all productive sectors and has affected the entire planet. The consequences of the economic shock continue to be felt and were translated into tens of millions of unemployed, millions of evictions and deep cuts in social benefits in our countries.

The welfare State, the instrument which produced some of the greatest advances in development and security in history, was jeopardized. Today, we live the paradox of seeing how that ideal of sustainable growth and social justice becomes more fragile in the countries of origin, while it is being reborn in emerging countries. While developed countries adopt policies of austerity and structural adjustments, which are concepts sadly familiar to Latin Americans, we see how social programmes proliferate in different corners of the planet, lifting millions out of poverty and mitigating inequality.

In the Dominican Republic, we still have a long road ahead of us, but we are taking firm steps in the fight against poverty and inequality. We are a small country but we do not lack ambition. We have made the commitment to our people, our citizens, to put them at the centre of our public policy. And we have set ourselves the goal to become a developed and prosperous country, where equal opportunities will be, not an ideal, but an everyday reality.

To achieve this, we have established a major domestic compact, which will be our top priority as a nation: namely, education. That is why we have doubled the current budget for public education and allocated to it 4 per cent of our gross domestic product. This will enable us to carry out the largest expansion of school infrastructure ever in our history and ensure that all girls and boys, without exception, will have access to quality public education. I am also proud to tell the Assembly that at the end of this year, thanks to the efforts of thousands of volunteers, we will be in a position to declare our country free of illiteracy.

In health, that second pillar essential to the welfare State, we are also making significant progress. We have eliminated the co-payment for all public hospitals. Every year, we add 450,000 participants to the subsidized health insurance system.

We are also giving priority to supporting small agricultural producers. We have been visiting rural communities every week for two years now, listening to people and seeking ways of helping them, such as by providing credits, training and infrastructure. The result of this, which is being monitored by the United Nations Development Programme, is a rebirth of the Dominican countryside, including improving its ability to feed the country and creating employment in rural communities. Thanks to that and other measures, over the past 18 months in the Dominican Republic overall poverty has been reduced by 6 per cent and poverty in rural areas by 9 per cent. In other words, in 18 months we have lifted more than half a million people out of poverty. We will continue to work tirelessly, implementing policies that put the economy at the service of the people and taking measures to combat poverty and inequality in a sustainable manner, and we will continue to create the basis of what one day will be a full welfare State in the Dominican Republic.

It is an honour for us to be one of the signatory nations of the founding Charter of the United Nations, which, as everyone knows, assigned to the Organization its purpose of saving future generations from the scourge of war. We should recognize that 2014 is presenting major challenges to that noble purpose. In different latitudes of the world, there have been violent conflicts between communities, peoples or States. The contexts of those conflicts are varied, but one thing remains constant — the extent to which past grievances shape our identities today, and how dangerous it is to allow oneself to be submerged by them. We watch in perplexity and indignation the virulence with which these violent conflicts are waged in different parts of the world.

The Middle East is once again the scene of the bloodiest sectarianism, which we condemn from this rostrum in all its manifestations. In the history of all nations or communities, without exception, there is a long history of disagreements, misunderstandings and quarrels that, at times, can be used to stir up the worst passions. They can be manipulated by individuals seeking to consolidate power or inflamed by extremist groups that feel that they have nothing to lose. There will always be someone who keeps old disputes alive. There will always be someone who does not mind sacrificing the true interests of the people at the time because of the wrongs of the past recorded in the history books.

However, there are plenty of examples to the contrary. Throughout the world, there are people and countries that have managed to leave their past behind in order to focus on building the future that they want for their children and new generations. Whether it is building bridges between countries once in conflict, as the European Union did, or among communities that decided to share the same nation, as in the case of South Africa. Hope can and must find its way.

I would also like, if I may, to bring a note of optimism from our Caribbean region. In the past year, we started a dialogue process with neighbouring Haiti that can rightly be regarded as historic. Our situation is of course unique but not to the degree that it cannot be echoed in other parts of the world. As members perhaps know, since the birth of our two Republics, there has been a long history of misunderstanding and disputes, which led to each of our countries having a distorted picture of the other.

It is true that in our past there were a couple of painful chapters, which are part of our identity. However, if we limit our identity to those few chapters, it will be impoverished. Our history is very rich. It has hundreds of chapters. In many of them, we can find the inspiration to guide us towards a better future and a more complete, richer and more human identity because that is clearly an excellent basis for understanding. In both countries, there are millions of people who want better development, education, health care, security and jobs and more opportunities. Those are concrete demands that require specific measures. The truth is that, by responding to them and reaching agreements in each of those areas, in a few months we were able to achieve the progress that we had not made in decades.

Little by little, we are moving forward. We are discovering that old wounds do not impede advancing on that path, but that they heal as we move forward. Our peoples demanded that we exercise the necessary courage to take the first step. We will continue to take steps until we achieve our goal of two free, sovereign and independent nations that, on the basis of their sovereignty, cooperate for the benefit of their respective peoples.

I wish to take this opportunity from this rostrum at the General Assembly to make an appeal. As I have said, a new era in Dominican-Haitian relations has begun. In that new phase, we would like to enjoy the support of the international community. One of our main actions to strengthen Dominican sovereignty and to ensure the rights of people living in our territory is to provide them all the relevant documentation. As members know, many of those people are Haitian. In order to regularize their status in the territory of the Dominican Republic, they must first have identity papers from their country of origin, which many of them unfortunately lack. Haiti is making an effort to reach those Haitians and to provide them with documents that recognize them as its nationals. However, Haiti's technical and economic resources are limited. In the past, a number of international organizations and countries have expressed their concern about the fate of Haitian migrants. We share that concern for humanitarian reasons and because it affects us as the main host country.

I would therefore note that now is an excellent time to move from words to actions. With specific and relatively simple actions, the international community can have a major and lasting impact on the lives of those people. I appeal for help for Haiti. May the international community help Haiti to document its people in its territory and in ours, since documentation is the first essential step for the enjoyment of a wide-ranging body of rights. Let us not allow a few technical shortcomings to be an obstacle to such a hopeful and necessary process with as much potential as that new stage of cooperation between the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

There are times when our best aspirations seem fragile. There are times when cynical people point out, under I do not know what law of the economy or in history, that we are bound to repeat the mistakes of the past. They say that poverty cannot be overcome, that the gap of inequality will always grow and that past grievances will be reborn in each new generation. However, we know that none of that is true. We know where to look to find the path of hope. We have only to look at those who are closest, that is, our own people, their basic daily needs and the hopes that motivate them to continue the struggle. If we look carefully, we see that the economy is not a prison but can be a tool for improving the lives of people. We find that the people are free. They are free to know which parts of their past they wish to use as a guide to their future and which they wish to leave aside.

We will find a way to work together, as we have done with the neighbours with whom we share an island, or as we found yesterday, during the climate summit, with the other countries with which we share the planet. The citizens that we represent, increasingly better informed, demand that we live up to our responsibility and our declared commitment: to preserve peace, to promote development and to make education and health care the right of all inhabitants of the planet.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Dominican Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya.

Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kenyatta: It is a great pleasure to address the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. As the current Chairman of the East African Community, I am particularly pleased to see The Honourable Sam Kutesa preside over the General Assembly. I assure you, Mr. President, of the full support of my Government during your presidency.

I would like to begin by lending my voice to all of those who have called for urgent and sustained attention to the devastating Ebola crisis in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Beyond the tragedy of the thousands who have lost lives and loved ones and the many more living with that threat, livelihoods and businesses have collapsed and aspirations for shared prosperity continue to shrink day by day. Kenya stands in solidarity with the countries affected by this devastating virus.

Earlier this month the Kenyan people gave $1 million to the effort to bring the crisis under control, and we stand ready to do more. Last week, ministers of health from the East Africa region converged in Nairobi and agreed on measures to safeguard our populations and ensure that the virus does not spread in our region. The suspension of international flights into Monrovia and other affected capitals, including by Kenya Airways, followed a stark warning from the World Health Organization (WHO). Those measures, among others, have isolated the affected countries and further hurt the people and economies of the region.

With regard to Kenya, our intention was not to do harm, but the warning from the WHO left us, as a regional hub, with few options. We stand ready to resume Kenya Airways flights once appropriate measures are put in place. Kenya believes that nothing in the immediate future requires more attention and determined response from the international community than the effort to stop and contain that devastating virus. I therefore welcome the establishment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, which I am sure will guide a collective global response.

The Ebola crisis underlines the imperative to build strong States that can withstand crisis and respond to emergencies. State weakness in many African countries comes from a history of development paradigms and practices that weakened the State. We must commit to building strong, resilient and accountable States that can effectively respond to shocks, adversities and emergencies in the future.

You, Sir, are presiding over a session of the General Assembly of historic significance to humankind. The sixty-ninth session will oversee the development and adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. This effort will build on the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, which developed those goals. Kenya is indeed proud to have been at the forefront of driving the Open Working Group process.

The new world development agenda must address itself to the entire cross-section of social, economic and environmental challenges that face the world in the twenty-first century. Issues of sustained economic development, equality among nations, climate change, industrialization, biodiversity loss and environmental protection must now go hand in glove with the traditional challenges of poverty, disease, hunger and inequality within nations. The new agenda must therefore be universal and comprehensive and responsive to all nations equally in order to be transformative in its impact.

We in Kenya recognize, however, that a number of obstacles stand in the way of achieving the new development agenda. The most immediate of these are terrorism and violent extremism. In Kenya, we stand at a critical moment. As we deepen our democracy, we find our nation thrust onto the front line of a regional and global war against terror. We have become acutely aware that the interplay between democratization, on the one hand, and effective counter-terrorism, on the other, presents severe challenges to our security and our governance institutions. Increasingly, terrorist actors are exploiting the expanded democratic space, sometimes feeding into and even influencing local politics. Unless we can provide an effective buffer to fight back against that tendency, Kenya and indeed other countries will find it difficult to entrench democracy and the post-2015 development agenda.

Besides the immediate threat of terrorism, the state of economic and social well-being is also affected by the lack of sustainable peace and security in many of our countries. From the Central African Republic to Mali, Libya and even as far afield as the Middle East and Europe, we see new conflicts and crises that could derail or delay development. In Kenya, we are particularly concerned by the perennial fragility that has come to characterize the greater Horn of Africa.

In Somalia, Kenya continues to sacrifice lives and resources in an effort to bring peace to our neighbour. We do this trusting that the international community will stay the course in Somalia. This involves consolidating peace and investing in stable, responsive national institutions that guarantee public safety, promote democracy and civil liberties, as well as development and peace in the country and region.

As we meet here, South Sudan also remains in turmoil. Kenya and other countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have invested considerable effort in ending that tragedy and sparing the people of South Sudan further suffering.

Regrettably, however, progress has been slow. We cannot let that young nation and its people down. At this session of the Assembly, I make a special plea for South Sudan, for no nation has, over the years, suffered as much neglect from the international community.

Similarly, no country today remains as desperately in need of rapid and transformative economic and social development as South Sudan. We cannot allow a return to political chaos, economic collapse or social desperation. I implore the leaders of that young nation to demonstrate determined and enlightened leadership and to make peace without further delay. Such action will save the people of the nation enormous suffering and offer hope of a better future. I thank the Security Council for its continued cooperation with IGAD in the search for peace in South Sudan. It is this concert of action that will help to bring about lasting peace, which in turn will form the basis for a transformative post-2015 development agenda for South Sudan and all of its neighbours.

On the continent of Africa the development model of the past 50 years has run its course. That outmoded model was defined by negative trade relations, paternalistic global governance regimes and overreliance on official development assistance. Moreover, it was driven by external prescriptions for development that were heavy on political instruction, but light on economic and social transformation.

We now know better. We know that our social and economic transformation shall come first from within our nations, our region and our continent and only secondly from the complement of external ideas and resources. Equally important, those external contributions must recognize the primacy of our aspirations and ideas. They must value and safeguard, rather than simply exploit and consume, our domestic resources and the product of our people's labour. For the post-2015 development agenda to be transformative, therefore, it must first embrace the primacy of developing countries whose people seek sustained development most. Anything less will be a recipe for failure.

We cannot speak of development or of transformation when millions of the world's people are mired in and are broken by unrelenting poverty, disease and hunger. The business of ridding the world of those plagues, touched upon but not fully embraced by the Millennium Development Goals, must be the first of the aspirations of the post-2015 development agenda. Equally important, it must be fully financed and accelerated, if we are to lay the groundwork for a transformative agenda for the next generation. I cannot emphasize that point enough. The scourge and shame of debilitating poverty, preventable diseases and chronic hunger must be erased from our global civilization. In reaching the sustainable development goals we have set ourselves, within a time frame of 15 years, we must not fail.

This year, at the United Nations, Kenya is proud to have presided over the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities. Kenya also presided over the United Nations Forum on Forests and co-chaired the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. Kenya is currently presiding over the UNICEF Board, as it seeks to provide global leadership for issues of concern to the world's children and their well-being.

Kenya is a member in good standing of the international community and it intends to continue to shoulder its global and regional responsibilities. Kenya is especially proud of the scores of Kenyans who work for the United Nations here in New York, but also further afield in peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and in many United Nations organizations in various United Nations stations around the world, including Nairobi. I salute all those Kenyans — every single one of them — for their dedication and commitment. We in Kenya believe that no nation is too poor or too rich, too big or too small to play its rightful role in making the world a better place for all.

At the national level, Kenya grounds her transformative agenda on a strategic vision — our Vision 2030. Importantly, in 2010 we adopted a new democratic Constitution, which expanded and guaranteed a wider range of rights for our people and defined new institutions for the advancement of those rights. Drawing on that, we have re-engineered our system of governance, making it more democratic, inclusive, devolved and responsive. We have also significantly expanded participation in political and development decision-making.

In four short years, we have begun to witness the fruits of those foundational changes. Aware of the imperative to carry along all our people in development, my Government launched targeted interventions for the most vulnerable in society. Those include a number of financial initiatives and training programmes for women and youth. We have also prioritized the advancement of children's rights and welfare through initiatives that reduce mortality and morbidity. Chief among them are universal immunization coverage, the promotion of breast-feeding for the first six months of a child's life, the provision of fortified foods and insecticide-treated mosquito nets, as well as free care for mothers and children in all government hospitals.

In that respect, I wish to commend the first Lady of Kenya, Ms. Margaret Kenyatta, for successfully launching the Beyond Zero Campaign that is tapping into private sector financing to bolster the management of chronic preventable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and to improve maternal and child health throughout the country.

Kenya is today on track to achieve universal primary education. Based on that, we have expanded our vision to include universal secondary education. We are seeking to build a more inclusive society, and strive to leave no one behind. It is for that reason that my Government has implemented a social protection cash transfer programme to orphans and vulnerable children, persons with severe disabilities and our elderly citizens. The programme targets 450,000 households throughout Kenya. Impact evaluations indicate that the programme has reduced poverty, improved family health and raised school enrolment.

As the Assembly is aware, Kenya is a leading tourist destination. We are also endowed with a number of rare species, some endangered, which we hold in trust for humankind. My Government attaches great value to conservation. We continue to raise awareness of the need to step up the fight against poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking. We have enacted laws to help fight the scourge, and continue to work with other countries and organizations to enhance the protection of our fauna and flora. Similarly, Kenya remains at the heart of international efforts to mitigate and adapt to challenges relating to climate change. We continue to work towards achieving 10-per cent forest cover; we are well above global targets for renewable energy use, and fully support all measures agreed upon at the recent United Nations Environmental Assembly in Nairobi.

Recognizing that our prosperity is linked to that of our neighbours, Kenya is engaged in a range of programmes and activities to hasten eastern African integration. We have eased the movement of goods and services across our borders. More importantly, our people can travel, work and settle across east Africa. We have also grown our trade volumes and are looking to closer integration across a range of other sectors.

Those are a few highlights of my Government's transformative agenda. We are committed to safeguarding and expanding those initiatives by creating an enabling and secure environment. In light of that, my Government continues to invest heavily to combat extremists and terrorists. The global effort needs to be reinforced because, as we know, the intent of terrorists is to destroy free, secure and democratic nations and people. As long as international terrorism exploits our open, multicultural and multi-religious society and gravely harms our social fabric, our progress towards achieving the goals of a transformative agenda will no doubt be slowed.

Kenya believes in a better, happier and more prosperous future for all. It is my hope that the confluence of forces that have come together to continually make our development efforts unnecessarily difficult will be persuaded with urgency, to reassess their motives and hopefully re-engage within the global community and with our country and region in a more positive, constructive and humane manner; recognizing that, in the end, no one people, nor one country, not even any one continent, can inhabit the world peaceably alone in isolation from the rest of the globe. We are in this world together to succeed together, to win together and to build a better future for all everywhere, together.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Solís Rivera (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We wish him the greatest success in carrying out his duties.

Whirlwinds of oppression and violence, anxiety, desperation and the systematic violation of human rights affect many corners of the world. We are witnessing an upsurge in violence and armed confrontations and an increase in atrocious crimes and extremism with an ever increasing number of displaced persons, humanitarian crises and deplorable acts that remain unpunished.

We are also concerned in particular about the universal dimension of the crisis caused by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). That reality requires the coordinated and forceful multilateral action of the international community in accordance with the relevant bodies of the Organization. We have seen the images and heard the screams of pain and distress rising out of Gaza, Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Mali, Libya, the Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and the Central African Republic. The cries can also be heard in Central America, where thousands of children and young people cross borders alone heading towards the United States of America, fleeing violence and a lack of opportunities in pursuit of dreams that can turn into nightmares. The Assembly can never put aside the future of those children because, in many ways, the girls and boys of Central America who travel alone are also our sons and daughters.

Costa Ricans are not indifferent to the terror of armed conflicts, less still to the suffering of the millions of victims of its most abject manifestations. As a nation, we have always stood with our sister nations in our efforts to bring an end to war and to establish peace. The conflicts that torment us often emerge from the fragile situations of States and their institutions: extreme poverty, corruption and impunity. In all of them, serious human rights violations have occurred. None of those conflicts broke out without prior warning. Ther were clear warning signs. In some cases, the threat was identified but no action was taken, as in Syria. In other cases, the danger was not acknowledged in time, as in South Sudan. However, in all such cases, the victims are those who are most vulnerable and most need our help but who cannot make their voice heard. They are the reason that we are here today.

Faced with the loss of human lives, we have reason to ask ourselves if we have kept the solemn promise that accompanied the founding of the United Nations 69 years ago. Do all Members of the Organization refrain from resorting to the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of other States? In some cases, that is so, in others not, but the failure to act is unacceptable. When States disregard that promise, the system of the United Nations is called to action. Otherwise, it becomes weak. It loses its essence. It loses its spirit.

The greatest challenge facing the international community, the United Nations and the Security Council — the challenge I wish to talk about today — is maintaining international peace and security as essential common goods. If we want peace, we must prepare for peace. Maintaining international peace and security begins with a culture of peace. As an unarmed democracy and home to the University for Peace, the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Costa Rica believes that the culture of peace and education for peace must be an absolute priority. We are convinced that peace, like war, is not the product of a human or an historic destiny but is borne of the very freedom of the human being.

Maintaining international peace and security is not restricted to dealing with conflicts. The Organization was founded on the ashes of two world wars precisely in order to prevent them. Prevention begins at the State level, with the strengthening of democracy and its institutions, good governance and a social welfare State founded of the rule of law as a basic prerequisite for the promotion of development and fair and inclusive societies. Prevention is also founded on a solid and functioning multilateral system. Costa Rica values and encourages the preventive diplomatic measures provided for in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, which include mediation, good offices and early warning.

Mr. Aslov, (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

As part of the Group of Friends of Mediation, I would like to highlight Costa Rica's leadership in negotiating General Assembly resolution 68/303, which seeks to acknowledge the key role that regional and subregional organizations play in mediating and managing conflicts. To date, that is the first General Assembly resolution on mediation to recognize that role. Its inclusion is therefore a true achievement of the General Assembly.

Maintaining international peace and security requires all States to resolve our disputes peacefully in line with the Charter of the United Nations and in strict accordance with international law and agreements. Costa Rica firmly believes in and implements all aspects of international law. We therefore underscore in particular the role of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. Peace cannot take root where there is impunity. When war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity have been committed, those responsible must be investigated and put on trial, including by the International Criminal Court when the national jurisdiction proves insufficient.

Our country opposes the weakening of the Rome Statute and any proposed reform that could promote tolerance for impunity. Once again, we remind the Security Council of its authority and responsibility to refer to the International Criminal Court cases that occur in non-States parties. That is the only approach we recognize. Our only weapon is and will always be international law.

Maintaining international peace and security also necessitates strengthening the single global Organization charged with defending them. The Security Council must progress from a reaction mentality towards one of action, and reaffirm its moral and political commitment to all humankind. It must be vigilant, strategic and proactive. It must be democratic, efficient, transparent and inclusive. My country has objected to the use of the veto to obstruct measures aimed at preventing or resolving conflict. Costa Ricans are amazed by the way some permanent Council members have invoked the principal of sovereignty to block intervention by the Council at a moment when it should have acted to prevent rivers from turning red with the blood of innocent victims.

We reiterate our call on the permanent members to refrain from using the veto, especially in situations of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and mass human rights violations. We therefore welcome the French proposal for a code of conduct addressing the use of the veto. In that spirit, Costa Rica supports the Secretary-General's Rights Up Front Action Plan so as to place human rights at the centre of the prevention activities of the United Nations. Given our serious and unshakeable commitment to human rights, I respectfully ask the Assembly to back Costa Rica's re-election to the Human Rights Council in October.

Our poet Jorge Debravo said that we Costa Ricans

> "have the obligation to fight for a better future for man, for a wonderful future. It is not an option for us to remain silent. It is not an option for us to be observers or simple witnesses to the struggles of our nations. In a time like this, remaining neutral is to betray humanity's future".

Because silence is not an option for us, we condemn the indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israel by Hamas and its use of human shields, just as we condemn the use of disproportionate force in military operations carried out by the Israel Defense Forces. We demand respect for the ceasefire and the negotiation of a permanent solution based on two States living side by side in peace and harmony.

Because silence is not an option for us, we reject the transfer of conventional weapons to existing conflict zones. As one of the world leaders in the negotiations that led to the Arms Trade Treaty — an idea originally proposed by Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former-President Óscar Arias Sánchez — we urge States to reconsider their laws and policies regulating the transfer and availability of arms and munitions, with a view to preventing access by those who would use them in violating human rights and international humanitarian law. To trade in death is to become an accomplice to atrocities. In that context, it would be appropriate to ask the Assembly: What is the ethical — not legal or regulatory — difference between trafficking arms that kill young people in less-developed countries and trafficking in drugs that lead to the same result in the planet's richest countries?

Because silence is not an option for us, Costa Rica rejects the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas of Syria, Gaza and eastern Ukraine. Costa Rica urgently calls on Member States to develop stricter rules and commitments to prohibit and restrict their use, not only because they violate international humanitarian law, but also because taking action on that issue, here and now, is critical to reducing incentives to non-combatants to take up arms and join the extremists.

Because silence is not an option for us, we also condemn the use of cluster munitions in Syria, South Sudan and eastern Ukraine. As the host of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster

Munitions, which took place in San Jose from 2 to 5 September, my country will continue to reject the manufacture, use and trade of those weapons. We rejoice that our beloved Central America has become the first region of the world to be declared free of cluster munitions, and reiterate our commitment to continuing to promote the Convention's universalization.

Because silence is not an option for us, we reiterate our rejection of nuclear weapons. No State should develop or possess nuclear weapons. Maintaining and updating nuclear weapons requires immense economic and human resources that are necessary for responding to the key challenges of our time, such as achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the sustainable development goals. Costa Rica is ready to negotiate a new, legally binding instrument on nuclear disarmament and calls on States to honour their commitments in that regard.

There can be no peace without sustainable development. There can be no peace in the world so long as there is poverty. There can be no peace in the presence of extreme wealth disparity. There can be no peace while we destroy humankind's habitat. There can be no peace while large sectors of humankind lack guaranteed access to drinking water. There can be no peace so long as we fail to understand that all of humankind and Planet Earth's biodiversity can and must thrive and live together. There can be no peace while we fail to guarantee all human rights — civil, cultural, economic, political and social — and in particular the right to development.

Because we yearn for peace, we call on the nations of the world to join us in defining the post-2015 development agenda. In just one year's time, the General Assembly will be tasked with adopting the international framework for achieving sustainable development. The challenge we will face is colossal; we must therefore humbly acknowledge that, despite progress, the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals has been, at best, insufficient.

I am convinced that the new sustainable development agenda must be a tool primed for action, with precise objectives, clear targets and indicators that will allow us to measure and monitor its success. In addition, it must result from a broad international consensus, including open and transparent negotiation processes that involve not only the Member States, but also other international actors and civil society organizations whose experience will significantly enrich the final agreement.

We are facing the most serious threat in our history — the very survival of our species. Actions taken to confront it must not be timid. On the contrary, every public policy, national and international alike, must take climate change into account as a determining factor. Costa Rica celebrates the vision of the Secretary-General in convening the Climate Summit at the opening of this session. Now is the time to demonstrate our political commitment to achieving a legally binding instrument on climate change by 2015. In addition, we demand robust action on the part of those countries that contribute most to global warming. Their production and consumption methods must be completely revised as their impact on the planet's most impoverished people — the ones most affected by climate change — is undeniable. If humankind is to survive, we must reverse the current trend.

Three years ago, 33 countries came together to establish the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Its agenda is underpinned by full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Its objective is to build diverse, equitable, fair and egalitarian societies, where eradicating poverty and hunger are given priority status. I salute the nations, members of this community.

In an international context of increasing military tension and armed conflict, and with the realization that a region's prosperity and stability can contribute to international peace and security, CELAC member States have declared Latin America and the Caribbean a zone of peace. As President Pro Tempore of CELAC, Costa Rica reiterates its commitment to preventive diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of disputes, with the aim of forever eradicating both the use and the threat of force from our region.

Costa Rica trusts that the United Nations will maintain international peace and security in order to promote sustainable development and ensure genuine respect for all human rights. At a time when we must control the reflexive use of coercive measures as a first course of action, when anxiety and despair are unsettling many, it is essential to re-establish hope. When faced with fear, we must have confidence. When faced with conflict, we must turn to peace. When faced with rejection and prejudice on the part of others, we must offer a caring and fraternal embrace. When faced with death, we must think of life.

With faith in dialogue and consultation, I have come to the General Assembly to ask that we declare peace — that we conscientiously and decisively work together towards a culture and education for peace; towards strengthening of the social State based on the rule of law, as well as its institutions and our economies; towards conflict prevention and resolution of international controversies by peaceful means; towards a renewed role for the Security Council; towards an end to and a reversal of climate change; and towards sustainable development from which not one person in the world is excluded.

I have come to tell the Assembly that silence is not an option for us. We must raise our voices when confronted with actions and situations that go against the universal principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. I have come to inspire us to work together on new paradigms for sustainable development, human security and peace for the whole world.

The Costa Rican poet Julieta Dobles Yzaguirre wondered: "Will the Earth in the new millennium/ become that common home?" I would like to respond to the poet with her own words: "No one is saved alone./ Perhaps in sharing words and actions/ peace will finally break out."

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Costa Rica for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Luis Guillermo Solis Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Mongolia.

Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Tsakhia: At the outset, Sir, may I join others in extending our heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Sam Kutesa on his unanimous election as President General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. Mr. Kutesa can count on my delegation's full support in the discharge of his enormous responsibilities in steering our work in the months ahead.

The world is faced with multiple crises — violent conflicts in various parts of the world, terrorist activities by extremist groups, unprecedented epidemics and natural calamities. At this time of turmoil, we, as a family of nations, must rally around this world Organization as a centre of multilateralism, upholding the Charter of the United Nations and the universal principles of international law.

We need peace and development. We need to do our utmost to implement the right of peoples to peace as emphasized by the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace, adopted 30 years ago at the initiative of Mongolia. We have consistently supported the joint efforts of the international community against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Mongolia is a party to the majority of international counter-terrorism instruments. The seemingly unthinkable atrocities committed by the terrorist group called the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant pose alarming threats to regional peace and security. The international community must take resolute action to defeat these threats comprehensively and in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mongolia commends the Secretary-General's leadership in rallying international support and establishing the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response to ensure a rapid, effective and coherent response to the Ebola crisis. We support the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions to that effect.

The situation in Ukraine should be resolved only through political dialogue, without the use of force. The current ceasefire needs to be made more sustainable; all efforts towards finding a solution, including the Putin plan outlined in Ulaanbaatar earlier this month, as well as the Minsk protocol of 5 September and its follow-up memorandum, should be taken into account.

Mr. Sirodjidin Aslov (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Just 25 years ago, Mongolia chose its development path, deciding to embrace the rule of law, democratic governance, a market economy and an open society. Although we are among the countries known as the third wave of democratization, the transition to democracy was in many respects unique in Mongolia.

We made a simultaneous transition to democracy and a market economy. We made that transition peacefully. In 1990, democratic parliamentary elections were not only the first of their kind in the region, but they were fully free and fair. To ensure inclusive growth and citizens' participation, a national policy on decentralization through direct democracy was introduced. As a result, citizens are now able to directly participate in identifying development priorities and allocations and monitoring local budgets.

To identify a long-term development pathway and regain the confidence of investors, a number of multi-stakeholder events have been held in Mongolia — the Economic Forum, the Business Summit and Discover Mongolia. In addition, new laws, particularly on investment, investment funding and petroleum, and budget transparency, have been adopted.

At the international level, Mongolia served as the Chair of the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies and the Community of Democracies. We currently chair the Freedom Online Coalition. It is the first time that an Asian country leads the Coalition. We support the Human Rights Council's decision that Internet freedom is a basic human right. As a staunch advocate of democracy and freedom, Mongolia will use its opportunity as chair of the Coalition to promote, both nationally and internationally, an Internet that is free and secure for all.

To support emerging democracies, Mongolia has set up an international cooperation fund. We have nothing to preach, but we have experience and lessons learned. We therefore shared with Kyrgyzstan our experience in parliamentary democracy and legal reform, and we held training sessions for Afghan diplomats and Myanmar journalists.

Mongolia highly commends the Secretary-General's leadership in galvanizing and catalysing global action on climate change. Climate change is not a challenge for the future; it is a matter of urgent Permanent Representativeiority today. Yesterday's United Nations Climate Change Summit 2014 offered world leaders a unique opportunity to voice their commitments to cut the emission gap and to pledge their commitment to the two-degree scenario in the lead-up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate, to be held in Paris next year.

But that pledge will remain a mere ambition if it is not backed up by bold action and strong political will. We are running out of time, but we cannot run out of planet Earth. The time to act is now. Moreover, the Green Climate Fund needs to be made fully operational. If resources are actually transferred as an incentive to countries that reduce their emission of greenhouse gases, that will have a multiplier effect. No one country is immune to climate change. Even my own country, Mongolia, which has a centuries-old tradition of living in harmony with nature, is experiencing its disproportionate effect. Conscious of that reality, Mongolia has recently adopted a green development policy. We expressed our support for the statement on carbon pricing, and for the New York Declaration on Forests to combat deforestation.

This session of the General Assembly has the important task of articulating the post-2015 development agenda based on the legacy of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In that regard, we look forward to a synthesis report by the Secretary-General Permanent Representativeior to the intergovernmental negotiations for the sustainable development goals (SDGs) during this General Assembly session. We also welcome the outcome of the Open Working Group on SDGs and commend its hard work over the past 18 months. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development underscored the special challenges facing the most vulnerable countries, including landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). However, we believe that the outcome document of the Open Working Group could have better reflected the special needs of landlocked developing countries. We hope that the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations will redress that situation.

In the run-up to the 10-year review of the Almaty Programme of Action, in June 2014 we hosted a high- level international workshop, "The World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation: Implications for LLDCs." We also joined the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports in order to become involved in regional connectivity. Facilitation of transit transportation, infrastructure development and reduction of trade barriers were among the issues discussed during the recent visits to Mongolia by President Xi Jinping and President Vladimir Putin. We agreed to expand our cooperation in those areas. Those agreements were reiterated at the first ever trilateral summit that brought together Mongolia, China and Russia on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation

Summit in Dushanbe earlier this month. The expansion of our cooperation with those two neighbours augurs well for regional trade and investment and paves the way for enhanced economic collaboration with our other neighbours.

Mongolia is redoubling its efforts to join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, to become a dialogue partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and to constructively engage in the East Asia Summit. Last July we also signed an economic partnership agreement with Japan. Strengthening peace and stability in North-East Asia is one of our national security Permanent Representativeiorities. We firmly believe that dialogue and open discussions enhance confidence among nations. Following up on the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security, we have successfully hosted a series of fruitful platforms, including a meeting of women parliamentarians, an international research conference and a meeting of mayors from cities in North-East Asian countries.

Stability on the Korean peninsula is crucial for maintaining regional peace and security. We support an early resumption of the Six-Party talks. As a country with a declared nuclear-weapon-free status, Mongolia firmly believes that the Korean Peninsula must be nuclear-weapon-free.

In a time of major geopolitical change, the United Nations system must reflect new economic and political realities. We need to accelerate the reform process, including the long-overdue expansion of Security Council membership in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. The issue of the Council's working method is also important for all small States, which make up a majority in the United Nations.

Out of 193 States Members, 105 belong to the Forum of Small States. Of the 70 States that have never been elected as members of the Security Council, 50 are small States, including my own country, Mongolia. As a responsible member of the international community, Mongolia has put forward its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council in the elections to be held in 2022, and is seeking the valuable support of its fellow members.

In conclusion, I would like to express my confidence that this session of the General Assembly will be able to deliver a common development strategy beyond 2015, a strategy that will inspire and guide us to work collectively towards a safer, more equitable and prosperous future in the years to come.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Mongolia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Jonathan: Let me begin, Sir, by expressing the best wishes of the Government and the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Mr. Kutesa's assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. His election is a fitting tribute to his invaluable and inspiring contribution to international diplomacy. I would also like to express my warm appreciation to his predecessor, Ambassador John Ashe, for the astute and steadfast manner in which he steered the affairs of the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly. I thank Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon not only for his relentless commitment to the work of the United Nations, but especially for his tireless efforts to address the challenges of world peace and security.

We are meeting at a time when the world looks with expectation towards 2015, which marks the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the launch of their successors, the sustainable development goals (SDGs). We must ensure, at all levels, that the SDGs reflect the goals and aspirations of all the regions of the world. Indeed, if the SDGs are to drive development and also meet the aspirations of developing countries for poverty elimination and sustainable growth, collective ownership of the emerging process must be our priority. We in Africa expect that the new SDGs will be people-centred. They must promote peace and security, structural economic transformation, inclusive growth, food security for all, environmental sustainability and the shared benefits of science and technology. Indeed, the gains of the MDGs must be incorporated into the emerging mechanism.

We applaud the wide-ranging recommendations of the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing on domestic resource mobilization, international development assistance, private sector finance and a supportive global enabling environment. My country is honoured to have been accorded the privilege, jointly with Finland, of leading that work as co-Chair of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts, as mandated by the Heads of State and Government at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio. Along with the work of the Open Working Group on sustainable development goals, the report provides a solid basis for intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. Nigeria is aware of the need to create an enabling environment for rapid development. We are committed to strengthening institutions and improving governance systems, in order to ensure an efficient use of resources and the process itself.

The President returned to the Chair.

The year 2015 also marks the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. Even though the Charter of the United Nations underlines the imperative to spare succeeding generations from the scourge of war, the world continues to witness the ravages of war and human suffering. Today's terrorism, manifested sometimes in insurgency, is vicious and aimless. Its consequences are agonizing, marked by a tendency to annihilate victims and completely destroy infrastructure and properties. The involvement of foreign fighters remains a common feature of terrorist groups, whether Al-Qaida in the Maghreb, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria or the newly emerging Islamic State (IS). The new dimension introduced by IS — namely, the goal of conquering territory and establishing its destructive ideology — is a major challenge that must be collectively halted before it becomes the norm. That challenge focuses renewed attention on the need to review the existing tools for United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The violent and criminal activities of Boko Haram have continued to pose a potent challenge to the Government and people of Nigeria. Through a wave of terror, assassinations, bombings and now abductions and kidnappings, predominantly in the north-east of the country, Boko Haram is attempting to truncate development in those areas through murder and mayhem. In April, our innocent daughters were abducted from a secondary school in Chibok, in the north-east. That callous and criminal act has attracted empathy for Nigeria across the globe.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the countries and organizations that have expressed solidarity with us and have continued to support our determined efforts to free our daughters. Although it has been over three months since they were abducted, we have never relented in our efforts to see them safely free. Together with our partners, we are working assiduously to free our daughters and reunite them with their families. To that end, I wish to thank the Government of France for organizing and hosting the special summit on security in Nigeria that was held in Paris in May. I also wish to express my appreciation to the Governments of Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Guinea for their committed efforts in support of the fight against Boko Haram. The outcome of the French process and the follow-up in London, Washington, D.C., and Abuja have helped to galvanize regional action and are already yielding positive results. Let me underline today that we shall not waver until we end this mindless war on the innocent and bring all the perpetrators to justice. We will triumph over terrorism.

The failure of the Security Council to agree on unanimous action over pressing challenges to global peace and security in Syria and Iraq and the conflict in Ukraine, as well as with regard to the renewed aggression between Israel and Palestine, has strengthened the case for Security Council reform. Today's challenges can be resolved only by a Security Council whose working methods engender transparency, inclusivity and common ownership through equitable representation of all regions in the decision-making process. It is imperative that we take advantage of 2015, which also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the 1965 reform, to make concrete progress on reforming the Security Council. We believe that there needs to be a fast-track process in line with the initiative of Mr. John Ashe, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, for establishing a working group on reform. Indeed, the Security Council requires the collective resolve of all Member States to ensure that 2015 brings decisive progress.

Even as Africa, and in particular West Africa, battles conflicts and terrorism, with progressive results, the region is being devastated by the outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus. While Nigeria was able to respond effectively to control the spread of the disease, the situation in Liberia and Sierra Leone requires sustainable collective global action if it is to be contained. Through the concerted efforts of our healthcare professionals, the World Health Organization and our international partners, we have been able to contain the virus, and we can confidently say that Nigeria today is Ebola-free.

However, we have continued to support efforts to contain the spread of the disease in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. In addition to a direct donation totalling $3.5 million, we have provided training and capacity-building support to the three countries. It is pertinent to stress the need for the international community to properly appreciate the magnitude of the Ebola challenge. Indulging in isolationist and discriminatory tendencies, as some countries are doing, will only worsen an already critical situation. To prevent the disease from becoming a global catastrophe, the United Nations must accord it the maximum priority it deserves.

Certainly, there has been much discussion on limiting ozone layer depletion since the commencement of negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1994. However, the extent of progress in key areas, particularly in limiting the contribution of man-made activities to greenhouse gas emission, has yet to be determined.

Nigeria appreciates the indispensable role of the United Nations in its search for solutions to all those challenges: terrorism, global peace and security, the environment, and forging sustainable economic development. We have been and will remain a reliable and active partner, especially as we collectively work to resolve the new and emerging threats to global peace and security. The world must come together and win the war against terror.

On 29 May 1999, Nigeria ended its military rule after the inauguration of a democratically elected President. Come February 2015, the country will conduct its fifth post-military-rule general election. In keeping with my election as President by the people of Nigeria, we shall conduct elections based on global best practices to further strengthen our democratic institutions.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Rwanda.

Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kagame: I want to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly.

We are living through a period of unprecedented progress in human development. The success of the Millennium Development Goals framework demonstrates that international cooperation remains strong, though we wish the expected results would come faster. Even on climate change, if the public and private sectors work together to increase investment in scientific research, we can look forward to a future where countries no longer have to choose between green energy and economic growth.

While we work on building peace and well-being in Africa, crises elsewhere in the world have aroused grave concern. Efforts to address them seem to have little effect, and in some cases they may even make things worse.

Two critically important public goods have been consistently undervalued by the international system in its approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. They are physical security and national identity. When security breaks down, the human costs are enormous. Extremists and opportunists are empowered. Citizens lose faith in public institutions, as grievances are settled in the street. As a result, sustainable gains in good governance cannot be made. It takes time and patience to build a better political system. There are no shortcuts. We are dealing with real people who want change, but with continuity and safety. They must be fully included in the process of consensus-building.

That is because structures of governance that are not developed from within will not take root. We should encourage full ownership and partnership, and the approach of international institutions and Member States should take those realities into account. In countries that have known only peace, such arguments may sound self-serving. But they are not, because lives are at stake.

The second neglected element is national identity. That is just as important. To manage the diversity in our societies, politics must be national in scope. Whatever differences we may have, our common citizenship is a bond that unites us. The negative experiences of nationalism have created doubt about affirming patriotism and national identity. However, what we see around the world today is that national identities are too weak, not that they are too strong. As a result, ethnicity, region and religion become the dominant currency of politics, and nations are torn apart. International systems should encourage efforts by Governments and civil society to strengthen national unity.

In Rwanda, we have focused on building accountable governance institutions and renewing our dignity as a nation. As a result, Rwandans today are among the most optimistic and civic-minded people in the world. For us, stability is not an abstraction, it is a reality that abides in the minds and hearts of the people and the institutions they build to sustain it. Once achieved, the horizon expands from poverty reduction to wealth creation and the attainment of ever higher measures of human development.

Therefore, our task in the international community is not to manage conflicts, but to help prevent and end those conflicts. If we focus on keeping people safe and bringing them together to solve their problems, we will be able to do so.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Rwanda for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Honduras.

Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Hernández Alvarado (*spoke in Spanish*): I am Juan Orlando Hernández. I was born in a humble village called Rio Grande, in the department of Lempira, a region with very high rates of inequality and poverty, although that is now changing, as is my whole country. I am here in my capacity as President of Honduras, a country located in the heart of the Americas. It is a country small in size, but with a great desire to achieve development based on its own identity, and with a people who struggle daily to advance and progress, and who aspire to better living conditions.

In 2009, our country suffered one of the worst political crises in its history. It led to several hundred million dollars in losses, and most unfortunately, to thousands of divided families and more poverty. That crisis caused more damage than any hurricane or natural disaster. However, today we can say that we have overcome the political crisis.

Honduras is a country where full democracy is practised and there is complete freedom to choose its leaders. In addition to representative democracy, we practice participatory democracy. Proof of that is the dialogue that will lead to a compact for Honduras that will be the result of listening to the views of different sectors of society on central issues for our people. Our Everyone for a Better Life Plan includes four basic pillars: restoring peace, generating investment and large-scale employment opportunities, supporting families living in extreme poverty, and combatting corruption and promoting greater transparency in the culture of the Honduran people.

Since taking office eight months ago, I have been completely devoted to recovering and maintaining peace and tranquillity, creating opportunities with fairer conditions for everybody. We need more investment to come to our country in order to create jobs that will translate into greater income for our families. To that end, Honduras has amended its Constitution to create one of the best platforms in the world for investment and employment. It is a very innovative. I am referring to the Zone for Employment and Economic Development, which is better known by its acronym ZEDE.

The Honduras ZEDE model is not just another free trade zone, similar to the 3,500 that already exist in the world. Ours is different because it is comprehensive. It is a jurisdiction with four dimensions: legal, economic, administrative and political. The Honduran ZEDE is a L.E.A.P. zone, which in English means "to jump forward". In Honduras, the ZEDE will help us take a competitive leap forward towards greater well-being. Rather than joining the race to the bottom, Honduras has decided to compete upwards, welcoming global investment through a special jurisdiction of the highest level to employ the most productive and profitable workforce in a highly favourable location at the centre of the Americas, bringing the Pacific and the Atlantic together.

In the legal dimension, ZEDE offers a common law system, with compulsory arbitration and international judges. Economically speaking, we are competitive in an open market, with a series of agile simple regulations, with highly attractive and sustainable incentives for the creation of good jobs under decent conditions. In the administrative dimension, ZEDE provides a technical, non-political structure without bureaucratic obstacles that is effective for companies that must operate at the speed of the markets and technology in the twenty-first century, and with full guarantees of transparency and security within the rule of law. Finally, to attract long-term investment and ensure good jobs, we guarantee political stability and transparency based on international treaties and agreements, with the support of an international commission of 21 trustees to ensure compliance with best practices for workers and the investors. I invite everyone to discover the great opportunity Honduras offers the world.

We have also created a participatory model of Government enterprises and the private sector, with mixed capital — in other words public-private partnerships. We are building an interoceanic logistical corridor linking the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean, allowing us to move cargo between both Oceans in less than six hours — I repeat, less than six hours. Our hope is to capture at least 5 per cent of the demand to move goods from one ocean to another.

We have made progress, but we also recognize that much remains to be done. For example, there has been a rise in the number of Hondurans going abroad, including an unusual migration of children and vulnerable youth to North America, many unaccompanied by an adult. This migration is the result of the violence created by the movement of drugs through our territory, poverty and the lack of opportunities. Special attention must be dedicated to this phenomenon, especially in countries that are responsible for the problem either because they produce the drugs or because they are the market where the drug is consumed. We believe that this is a shared responsibility. Faced with the scant interest in solving the problem shown but those who created it, we Hondurans must stress this issue in every forum that we possibly can, because we must speak clearly and forcefully about that issue.

Honduran territory is today one of the main battlefields of a war that is not our own. We did not start this war. Its strategies are decided outside Honduras, and it involves drug-consuming countries in the North and drug producing countries in the South. It is a real monster — a multinational, criminal octopus without nationalities, borders or scruples, which is dedicated to the trafficking, trade and consumption of drugs and to encouraging demand, especially in the wealthiest societies.

The drugs transiting through Honduras and Central America destroy the lives and peace of our people, our youth, our children and our women. From those who orchestrate and organize the transnational activity within our territory to ordinary citizens and the children involved as pawns in drug dealing and addicts, all are affected. They are all embarking on the path of no return, which will tear apart our society, destroy families, corrupt officials and destroy institutions. I invite members to ask themselves: Who are the real culprits in this cycle of death, misfortune, mourning, struggle, blood and pain? It is not Hondurans, I can assure the Assembly of that.

In forums such as this, we need to agree on the basic contours of the issue and the facts. We cannot, in the midst of crisis and without coming to useful or concrete conclusions, put forward proposals based on legalizing production and consumption, on the one hand, and on waging a merciless war on trafficking and illegal drug use, on all fronts and regardless of cost, on the other. I ask myself, and I invite members to ask themselves: Who are the true victims of this tragedy? All those who cannot live in peace in modern society are victims, as are those who cannot live in society without using drugs. Society itself is a victim, as it is unable to organize its efforts and manage its resources in a rational manner so as to create new opportunities.

Honduras produces and consumes practically no drugs. We are a transit country. Unfortunately, we provide only the battlefield and the dead. We provide the resources to combat drugs' transit through our territory, and those are resources that we are prevented from investing in meeting our development problems and challenges. I repeat: we are not responsible for the war.

I think it is time to do what we have to do: respect human rights; follow what experts and our common sense are telling us; attack the problem at its root, once and for all; and do it together and throughout the affected region. We must create a multinational force capable of dealing successfully with a phenomenon that is transnational in terms of its organization, its market, its projections and its financing. This morning, President Obama called for such unity in fighting radical fundamentalists. I would ask: What is the difference between the effects of terrorist acts perpetrated by radical fundamentalists and the effects of the terrorist acts perpetrated by those who traffic in drugs? What is the difference?

Today the international community is discussing what happens in other regions of the world when children, young people and families are displaced by war, violence and radical extremists. Those are all situations that we as a nation also condemn. Of course we do. However, little is being said and about the thousands of families living in the northern triangle of Central America. I do not want to believe that this issue will simply be forgotten. As human beings, we cannot allow that to happen. I would once again ask the Assembly: What is the difference between those displaced by violence in other regions and those displaced by the violence committed by drug traffickers and transnational criminals? What is the difference?

One difference is that those displaced — those thousands of families and individual children — come knocking on the doors of the United States of America. As a region, we cannot continue to ignore this human drama, which affects thousands of Central Americans, especially unaccompanied migrant minors who, on their way to the United States, have been the victims of violence, transnational crime, rape, human trafficking and the organ trade. Many have died or disappeared in the desert. We cannot forget that. Those children deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. They are innocent victims. We are talking about innocent children just like our children and grandchildren. They are vulnerable human beings.

I would like to inform the Assembly that yesterday, the Secretary-General kindly agreed to have me, along with the ministers of Guatemala and El Salvador, present to him the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle, which maps out an initiative to support and create opportunities so that our countrymen are able to stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with everyone in our region — and I repeat, everyone, because this cause is our common responsibility.

An important part of the solution to the child migration problem is to create job opportunities for their parents there, in Central America, and to improve security for young people there, in Central America. Both issues are closely linked to the trade policies of the United States. We are not asking for financial assistance or charity. What we are asking for is just and equitable trade treatment, as is already given to other countries in the world. What we want is to jobs, to create those opportunities. Honduras supports efforts to unite the world in peace and prosperity through just trade and better access to major world markets. Within that vision, and in the context of the current negotiations, we demand that Honduras and Central America receive the same commercial treatment as Asian countries do, in order to enable us to compete.

To be frank, the United States giving preferential tariffs and rules of origin to other countries and leaving Honduras and Central America out of that would lead to thousands of jobs being lost in our region and would lead more children to illegally cross the border. I say to President Obama, Congress, the North American people and the people of the world: Honduras is committed to solving the child migration issue and to fighting drug trafficking. Many of them know this, clearly, given our determination. But if there is not a reasonable degree of coherence in our countries' trade policies, as partners, what is the real message to our people in Central America? What should Honduran children and their parents expect, in Central America?

Given the many problems we face as Hondurans, we have learned to see every crisis as an opportunity, and my Government follows the Christian principles of solidarity and the common good. We are promoting a very ambitious programme called A Better Life, through which we are making small changes and solving big problems. I am pleased to note that, now, some of those with the biggest fortunes are also promoting solidarity. I invite us all to ask: How much money is enough for a human being to feel fulfilled?

(*spoke in English*)

How much money is good enough?

(*spoke in Spanish*)

A few days ago we read about the humanitarian action being undertaken by one of the world's richest men, Mr. Bill Gates, who, through his foundation, is seeking A Better Life in terms of health for thousands of poor families by promoting scientific research into new designs for basic sanitation systems. I think Mr. Bill Gates found the answer to the question.

(*spoke in English*)

How much money is good enough?

(*spoke in Spanish*)

As we are working on the same issue, I take this opportunity, with the Assembly's permission, to invite Mr. Bill Gates, a citizen of the world, to my country to work on this common endeavour.

It is very encouraging that some of the wealthiest people in the world are not seeking the secret of eternal youth, or trying to send expeditions to other planets while our brothers are dying on this one. On the contrary, they are aware of the problems of their poorer brethren. This is going on in many countries, including Honduras, where many good businesspeople have signed on to work with our A Better Life programme and are demonstrating social responsibility by creating jobs. And that is what this is all about — solidarity and social responsibility, but not romantic social responsibility. In that regard, I would like to quote Pope Francis, a citizen of the world, whose words I hope will ring in our ears.

> "I have never seen a moving van following a funeral procession, but there is a treasure we can take with us, a treasure that no one can take away — not those things we have kept for ourselves, but what we have given to others".

We should think about that and consider those words. Honduras is a country where 43 per cent of the population lives on less than a dollar a day, which is not enough to pay for a person's basic nutritional needs. That is why we are making a major effort to respond to these people's needs through the Better Life programme, thus enabling them to live with dignity. The Better Life programme is designed to respond to the needs of 835,000 families, who are getting help in improving their homes, including providing access to drinking water and basic sanitation, decent roofs overhead and floors underfoot, family gardens and monetary support to ensure that children attend school, have improved health care and change their living conditions so as to achieve a better life.

Our housing improvements include the use of clean stoves, reducing wood consumption and smoke, which is harmful to women and children's health and which, according to the World Health Organization, kills 500,000 women around the world every year. In Central America alone, about 35,000 people die from the wood smoke emitted from dirty cooking stoves every year. With every eco or clean stove installed, we make a contribution to the rest of humankind by saving 15 medium-sized trees every year, thus helping to protect the environment. In that regard, I would like to highlight the work of former United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for her Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves initiative, whose goal is to put clean stoves in 100 million households by 2020. On this subject we share Mrs. Clinton's vision and are working hard to achieve it.

When presidents come to the General Assembly of the United Nations, they often prepare speeches they deem most appropriate and specific to the lofty heights of this great forum, but beyond the words themselves, the message I want to convey is that the most important thing is for all of us to be accepted as citizens of the world, with the same duty to fight and defend our territory, our families and our planet, with the same right to aspire to a better life, and that what is vital is the support of those who have the most to those who have the least. If my message today can reach and move a few to act, I think it will have been worth coming. I would like to remind the Assembly that if we are part of the largest forum in the world, it is because we consider ourselves to be citizens of the world, human beings with the same dignity, and therefore all of us, everyone of us, equal. Honduras is making progress; Honduras is changing; Honduras sends its greetings to all.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Honduras for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Filip Vujanović, President of Montenegro

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Montenegro.

Mr. Filip Vujanović, President of Montenegro, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Filip Vujanović, President of Montenegro, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Vujanović: I would first like to express my great appreciation for the efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to promote and achieve peace, security and prosperity in the world. I would also like to duly acknowledge the work of Mr. John William Ashe, President of the General Assembly at its previous session, to offer my best wishes to President Kutesa for his stewardship of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, and to confirm Montenegro's willingness to cooperate fully with him in his accomplishment of his important duties. I emphasize the relevance of the theme of the current session, since it is highly pertinent to our efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals with the imminent arrival of 2015.

As ever, Montenegro remains committed to an effective multilateral system, resting on a strong United Nations. As a responsible Member of the United Nations, Montenegro is therefore committed to continuing to contribute to strengthening the Organization and building a functional, integrated system that promotes respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, while devising and implementing global responses to global challenges. In that regard, we will continue to support the process of general reform and of system-wide coherence, as well as the integrated Delivering as One programme of action, based on successful implementation at the national level. I am proud to point out here that in March, in the most beautiful part of Montenegro's capital city, Podgorica, we opened the United Nations Eco building, host to all the specialized United Nations agencies, and offering the best possible conditions for their work and their implementation of the Delivering as One concept. I see this project as a strong tool of reliable partnership for Montenegro in achieving fundamental United Nations goals.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, Montenegro will continue to fully support the integration of human rights dimensions into all aspects of the work of the United Nations and to further strengthen the role of the Council in response to violations of human rights, while preserving the universality of international human rights law and the independence of the United Nations human rights system. In our approach, the key priority is to promote the rights of vulnerable groups — children, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons — and to promote gender equality and the fight against discrimination.

Peace and stability, as preconditions for prosperous development, can be ensured through positive activism in global international organizations, primarily in the United Nations, and the constructive approach of every country in the sphere of regional policy, as well as a commitment to good-neighbourly cooperation. Therefore, Montenegro strongly promotes this approach in bilateral relations and regional initiatives in South-East Europe. We are certain that the success of Montenegro in the process of integration into the European Union and NATO represents a major contribution to the stability and opening up of prospects for development of the wider Balkans region.

Montenegro strongly supports global efforts towards disarmament and non-proliferation. This year, we ratified the Arms Trade Treaty, becoming the forty-fourth country to do so. Our ratification represents our contribution towards the entry into force of that historic Treaty, as well as an illustration of our firm commitment to a responsible global arms trade.

Open and frozen conflicts, from Ukraine across the Middle East to Africa, pose a threat to durable global stability. Of particular concern is the fact that the escalation of violence typically causes humanitarian disasters and massive human rights violations. We fully advocate an urgent end to violence and a political dialogue that would lead to solutions in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and relevant United Nations resolutions. In that context, we believe that the United Nations and international community's activities should place stronger emphasis on better utilizing preventive measures under Chapter VI of the Charter, with a special focus on mediation as a highly cost-effective tool for conflict prevention and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

I would like to reaffirm Montenegro's strong commitment to the responsibility to protect as a matter of national priority. Montenegro welcomes the French initiative to seek a code of conduct on the use of the veto in situations of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, and remains keen on putting that proposal into operation.

The rule of law and the protection of civilians in peacekeeping missions are of particular importance, and we stand for the consistent implementation of the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping missions, to which we are ready to contribute. Unfortunately, terrorism still poses an enormous threat to international peace and security, as evidenced by current events in the Middle East. I consider it necessary to step up efforts at all levels in preventing terrorism, in accordance with international instruments and the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Montenegro strongly promotes a sustainable development policy and, in line with our active participation in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, we are committed to further contribute towards the elaboration of a transformative and ambitious post-2015 development framework. I think that the post-2015 development agenda must be based on an approach of respect for and the promotion of human rights, where human development will truly ensure that no one is neglected. Poverty eradication and sustainable prosperity for the benefit of all people and the planet must be the overarching objective and guide the design of a transformative development agenda.

We strongly support the important United Nations mission implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) relating to human development, which essentially affirms fundamental human values. We are proud that two weeks ago, UNDP chose Montenegro to host the presentation of this year's *Human Development Report* for the South-East Europe and Central Asia regions. We see this as a recognition of Montenegro's progress, affirmation of human development, and proof of a reliable partnership between Montenegro and the United Nations.

Finally, I wish to emphasize the fact that the United Nations has a responsible partner in Montenegro, which will continue to promote and pursue the goals and values fostered by the Charter.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Montenegro for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Filip Vujanović, President of Montenegro, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.